



That means 95.7 percent of their money came from special interests or their own pockets this year, compared to 81.5 percent two years ago.

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For its study, the Morning News defined special interests as corporations and their officers, lobbyists, trade and union groups, political action committees and people living outside a member's district. Political party groups were included as special interests because they in turn receive most of their money from special-interest groups.

## Special-interest favorites

*Legislators who received the greatest amounts from various special interest groups*

DONOR	LEGISLATOR	AMOUNT
<b>Health-care industry</b>	Greg Curtis	<b>\$50,410</b>
<b>Financial industry</b>	Greg Curtis	<b>\$47,050</b>
<b>Real estate industry</b>	Greg Curtis	<b>\$20,881</b>
<b>Lobbyists/lawyers</b>	Greg Curtis	<b>\$12,400</b>
<b>Labor unions</b>	Gene Davis	<b>\$10,374</b>
<b>Beer/alcohol</b>	Greg Curtis	<b>\$4,000</b>
<b>Oil industry</b>	Greg Curtis	<b>\$3,200</b>
<b>Tobacco industry</b>	Sheldon Kilpack	<b>\$1,950</b>

SOURCE: Deseret Morning News analysis of state financial disclosure records

*Deseret Morning News graphic*

Special-interest money is so plentiful that 30 members did not raise any money from regular constituents.

Also, the Morning News found that 87 of the 104 legislators raised more than 90 percent of their money from special interests (see chart). The least raised by any individual was 64.3 percent by Sen. Fred Fife, in a 2004 race.

Some legislators significantly increased the amounts they accepted from special interests. For example, while Rep. Roz McGee, D-Salt Lake, had the lowest percentage of special-interest money among House members this year at 71.7 percent, that was vastly higher than the 19.8 percent of her total that had come from special interests two years ago.

McGee was targeted for defeat this election by both Republicans and a pro-school-choice group, and so needed to raise more funds than usual.

### The biggest donors

Some individual donors give much more than others, and a small core of them provided a significant share of the overall campaign money that went to election campaign winners.

The individual group that gave the most to new legislators was the Utah Association of Realtors (\$162,500); followed by the Utah Banking Association (\$70,400); Reagan Outdoor Advertising (\$63,150); Parents for Choice in Education (\$55,133); and the Utah Education Association (the teacher's union), \$49,818. (See related chart).

The Utah Association of Realtors itself provided about 4 percent of all money raised by legislators. The Top 10 groups provided 17 percent of all money raised. The top 50 provided just under half of all money raised (46 percent to be exact).

Chris Kyler, CEO of the Utah Association of Realtors, said a few other groups may have given more to all legislative candidates in 2006, but the Realtors happened to give the most to those who won.

It's a key strategy of the group, he noted, to thoroughly research how legislative candidates either vote on housing issues or, if not in office, which candidates purport to favor issues important to

## Special-interest donors

RANK	DONOR	LARGEST AMOUNT
<b>1.</b>	Utah Association of Realtors	<b>\$162,500</b>
<b>2.</b>	Utah Banking Association	<b>\$70,400</b>
<b>3.</b>	Reagan Outdoor Advertising	<b>\$63,150</b>
<b>4.</b>	Parents for Choice in Education	<b>\$55,133</b>
<b>5.</b>	Utah Education Association	<b>\$49,818</b>
<b>6.</b>	Utah Medical PAC	<b>\$48,350</b>
<b>7.</b>	Zions Bank	<b>\$47,450</b>
<b>8.</b>	Merit Medical/Fred Lampropoulos	<b>\$42,850</b>
<b>9.</b>	Select Health	<b>\$38,785</b>

Realtors. "In important races we may give more," he said, "although it scares us how the cost of legislative campaigns is increasing."

The Morning News also grouped donations by type of industry (see chart). The health-care industry gave the most (\$494,655) followed by the financial industry (\$385,678); political party committees (\$314,468); and real estate (\$261,325).

Some industries appearing on the list may be a bit surprising.

In Utah — famous for nonsmoking and nondrinking Mormons — the beer industry came in at No. 20 on the list, providing \$38,750, and tobacco came in at No. 23, giving \$35,650.

## Special friends

Every special-interest group has special friends. But one member of the Legislature was favored by an amazing number of such groups: House Speaker Greg Curtis.

He personally was the No. 1 recipient from such special interests as the health-care industry (receiving \$50,410); the finance industry (\$47,050); the real estate industry (\$20,881); lobbyists/lawyers (\$12,400); the beer/alcohol industry (\$4,000); and oil (\$3,200).

Curtis did spread the wealth that he received, however, as party leaders often do to help their bids for re-election to leadership offices. He gave \$48,000 to other candidates and party arms.

When Curtis was asked why he raised so much from special interests — \$265,000 — he said, "To keep my options open." That could include running for a higher office in the near future. (Should Utah get a fourth U.S. House seat, Curtis' Sandy district would be in the new, open 4th District.)

## Donors BY INDUSTRY OR GROUP

<b>1. Health</b>	<b>\$494,655</b>
<b>2. Finance</b>	<b>\$385,678</b>
<i>Banks</i> .....	<b>\$147,266</b>
<i>Credit unions</i> .....	<b>\$51,184</b>
<i>Insurance</i> .....	<b>\$125,450</b>
<i>Payday loans</i> .....	<b>\$25,750</b>
<b>3. Party committees</b>	<b>\$314,468</b>
<b>4. Real estate</b>	<b>\$261,325</b>
<b>5. Candidates giving to selves</b>	<b>\$232,969</b>
<b>6. Ideological (gay rights, abortion, etc.)</b>	<b>\$202,436</b>
<b>7. General business</b>	<b>\$185,615</b>
<b>8. Politicians (giving to members)</b>	<b>\$145,589</b>
<b>9. Lobbyists/lawyers</b>	<b>\$141,899</b>
<b>10. Labor</b>	<b>\$138,718</b>
<b>11. Education</b>	<b>\$109,051</b>
<b>12. Energy</b>	<b>\$108,950</b>
<i>Oil/gasoline/petroleum</i>	<b>\$58,450</b>
<b>13. Communications</b>	<b>\$91,075</b>
<b>14. Construction</b>	<b>\$83,200</b>

So much special-interest money in legislative races "is a concern," said Curtis. But often special interests offset each other. "Both the banks and credit unions gave to me," and they often oppose each other in legislative fights, he noted.

And legislative races are becoming more and more expensive, so lawmakers seek and accept money from wherever they can raise it, Curtis said.

Finally, Curtis said that if a candidate happens to have sufficient campaign funds, why ask neighbors for needed cash simply to avoid 100 percent "special-interest" giving?

Of note, some groups spread their influence by giving to many, many legislators. A total of 14 special-interest groups gave to at least half of winning legislators.

They include: Reagan Outdoor Advertising (89 of 104 legislators); Micron Technology and the Parsons Behle & Latimer law firm (78 each); Kennecott (77); Merit Medical and Qwest (71 each); and the Utah Association of Realtors (70).

## Typical receipts

The Morning News also figured how much the typical legislator from each party received from various interest groups, accomplished by totaling donations to members of each party and dividing by the number of members.

A typical member raised about \$36,000 in donations from all sources.

The typical Republican received from individual donor groups: \$1,980 from the Utah Association of Realtors; \$703 from Parents for Choice in Education; \$797 from the Utah Bankers Association; \$595 from Reagan Outdoor advertising; and \$534 from Zions Bank.

By overall industry, a typical Republican received \$4,896 from the health-care industry; \$3,657 from the financial industry; \$3,448 from party organizations; \$2,946 out of their own pocket; and \$2,991 from the real-estate industry.

The typical Democrat receipt from individual donor groups included: \$1,352 from Bruce Bastian (co-founder of WordPerfect, who is a gay activist); \$1,079 from the Utah Education Association labor union; \$739 from the Equality Utah gay rights group; \$583 from Reagan Outdoor Advertising; and \$513 from the Utah Credit Union political activity committee.

By overall industry, the typical Democrat received \$4,000 from the health-care industry; \$3,786 from labor unions; \$3,584 from the financial industry; \$3,299 from ideological groups; and \$1,848 from lobbyists/lawyers.

## Influence bought?

Not surprisingly, some groups that often push legislation (or fight it) are among the largest donors.

Utah's banks and credit unions for years waged war as credit unions sought more banklike privileges. Banks gave current legislators a healthy \$147,266 in their last campaigns, and credit unions gave a respectable \$51,184.

1-800-Contacts in recent years pushed legislation to help its mail-order business for contact lenses, and it was No. 10 in the individual-donor group, giving \$37,450 (spread to 60 legislators).

Some industries appeared to be gearing up for possible fights. For example, the energy industry increased donations by about 25 percent, especially among oil and gas companies (which have upset Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. and many customers with high prices, and some people have called for more regulation of the industry).

EnergySolutions (formerly Envirocare), known mostly for brushing up its image with TV ads and buying the naming rights from Larry H. Miller for what is now the EnergySolutions Arena, also spread plenty of money for fights it often sees over regulations about the low-level nuclear waste that it imports to its

## Giving to all

*Groups that gave to at least half of the Legislature*

DONOR	LEGISLATORS RECEIVING DONATIONS*
Reagan Outdoor Advertising	<b>89</b>
Micron Technology	<b>78</b>
Parsons Behle & Latimer (law firm)	<b>78</b>
Kennecott	<b>77</b>
Merit Medical	<b>71</b>
Qwest	<b>71</b>
Utah Association of Realtors	<b>70</b>
UMPAC (Utah Medical Assoc.)	<b>68</b>
UBA PAC (Utah Banking Assoc.)	<b>66</b>
EnergySolutions	<b>66</b>
Zions Bank	<b>65</b>
Questar	<b>65</b>

dumps.

It was No. 15 among large donors, giving \$31,000 to 66 legislators.

### **Is reform coming?**

While good-government groups say such data show the need for reform, few expect it to actually occur any time soon. Legislators, who make campaign finance law, have little interest in changing the way they've raised money for their successful campaigns.

For example, Sen. Greg Bell, R-Fruit Heights, who has run other so-called legislative reform bills in the past, has stayed away from campaign finance changes. "It is a bad system. But I can't think of a better one."

Bell warns that limiting campaign contributions to a certain level may lead to only rich people, who can self-fund their campaigns, running for and winning legislative seats.

However, Musci of Utah Common Cause says, "We clearly support a role for public financing of legislative campaigns," where money for campaigns could come from taxpayer check-offs — similar to how presidential campaigns are funded nationally.

"A political campaign is a central part of the process of democratic governance," says Musci. "If the public is not funding that part of the process, then that critical part is owned by special interests. And that translates into how decisions are made once those elected officials take office."

Jowers said, "When citizens get involved in a legislative campaign or an issue, they are always more powerful than a special interest." He added, "But that's true only if they are engaged. If not, then special interests are always there to fill the power vacuum."

## DEMOCRAT

# Typical donations

Donations a typical Democratic legislator received in the past election:\*

### From key individual donors/groups

Bruce Bastian (gay activist)	<b>\$1,352</b>
Utah Education Assoc.	<b>\$1,079</b>
Equality Utah (gay rights group)	<b>\$739</b>
Reagan Outdoor Advertising	<b>\$583</b>
Utah Credit Union PAC	<b>\$513</b>
1-800-Contacts	<b>\$491</b>
Victory Fund (gay rights group)	<b>\$420</b>
Anheuser-Busch	<b>\$409</b>
Consumer Lending Alliance	<b>\$398</b>
Utah Assoc. of Realtors	<b>\$374</b>

### From key overall industries/sources

Health-care industry	<b>\$4,000</b>
Labor unions	<b>\$3,786</b>
Financial industry	<b>\$3,584</b>
Ideological groups	<b>\$3,299</b>
Lobbyists/lawyers	<b>\$1,848</b>
Beer	<b>\$669</b>
Oil	<b>\$463</b>
Tobacco	<b>\$317</b>

\*Determined by figuring donations by groups to all Democrats, then dividing by number of Democratic party members.

SOURCE: Deseret Morning News analysis of state financial disclosure records

Deseret Morning News graphic

## REPUBLICAN

# Typical donations

Donations a typical Republican legislator received in the past election:\*

### From key individual donors/groups

Utah Association of Realtors	<b>\$1,960</b>
Utah Bankers Assoc.	<b>\$797</b>
Parents for Choice in Education	<b>\$703</b>
Reagan Outdoor Advertising	<b>\$595</b>
Zions Bank	<b>\$534</b>
Utah Medical Association	<b>\$529</b>
ATK	<b>\$460</b>
Select Health	<b>\$367</b>
Utah Hospital PAC	<b>\$380</b>
Merit Medical	<b>\$380</b>

### From key overall industries/sources

Health-care industry	<b>\$4,896</b>
Finance industry	<b>\$3,657</b>
Republican Party arms	<b>\$3,448</b>
Out of their own pocket	<b>\$2,946</b>
Real estate industry	<b>\$2,991</b>
Oil	<b>\$597</b>
Tobacco	<b>\$352</b>
Beer	<b>\$269</b>

\*Determined by figuring donations by groups to all Republicans, then dividing by number of GOP members.

SOURCE: Deseret Morning News analysis of state financial disclosure records

Deseret Morning News graphic

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