

## States, Redistricting & Election 2000

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By Edwin Bender

Early in the 2000 election cycle, as the presidential candidates began their campaigns in earnest, the Tennessee Republican State Executive Committee was rolling in soft-money contributions passed down from the Republican National State Elections Committee.

Usually low on the RNC's priority list for party-building funds, Federal Election Commission records show the Tennessee Republican Party receiving \$423,000 as of August 1999, putting it second on the priority list behind only California.

Why the largesse to a state that in the 1998 cycle ranked 18<sup>th</sup> on the list of recipients of RNC soft money and 14<sup>th</sup> in 1996?

Possibly the RNC is bent on embarrassing Vice President Al Gore on his home turf.

But a more likely reason is how the upcoming 2000 Census and the subsequent redistricting will affect Tennessee legislative and congressional districts. If just two Republican state Senate candidates win in 2000, then the Democrat Party's control of the Senate will have been broken, and Republicans will have a stronger say in how the redistricting process plays out.

Greg Wanderman, executive director of the Tennessee Democrat Party, told the Institute that the Republican Party of Tennessee has made winning two seats in the state Senate a priority, specifically because of what that would mean to the redistricting process.

Brian Eastin, executive director of the Tennessee Republican Party, was more emphatic in his comments to the Institute: "In GOP circles, 2000 is the battle and redistricting is the war. It's crucial. Here in Tennessee it's the focus, taking (two seats in) the Senate, because of redistricting." And the national party has expressed "a great deal of interest" in seeing that those seats, and others in states with narrow margins, go to Republican candidates, he said. RNC Chairman Jim Nicholson recently said the national party will devote millions in contributions to the effort nationally.

If the party succeeds in Tennessee, then the GOP-controlled Senate will be able to block any redistricting plan that the Democrat-controlled House may propose, Eastin said, bouncing the process into the courts. The state party thinks it could live with a plan that was approved through the courts, he added.

A similar pattern -- large amounts of RNC soft money in a state that has historically been a low priority -- can be seen in Georgia, where a mere five state Senate seats will alter control of the redistricting process. Georgia was ranked third in receipt of early RNC soft money, whereas it had been ranked 20 in 1998 and 7 in 1996.

Or there's Missouri, where the RNC funneled more than \$870,000 directly to candidates in the 1998 cycle in an effort to seize control of the legislature, which now stands with the Democrats controlling the House by 10 seats and the Senate by 2.

The campaign over who will control the once-every-decade redistricting process has been called "the D-Day of politics" by Tom Hofeller, a Republican organizing around the redistricting issue. Redistricting committees and commissions the nation over will be using new census data to reconfigure legislative and congressional election districts once all the heads have been counted. In a number of states with legislatures that are controlled by narrow margins, a win or two in the state House or Senate in 2000 could mean the difference between a redistricting committee controlled by Democrats or Republicans, and districts that favor one party over the other. And the way those districts are drawn will directly affect the outcome of many congressional campaigns.

As a result, national party organizations have been flooding the states with campaign contributions, both soft money and hard, to influence the redistricting process, and in a heavy-handed way enhance their candidates' chances of retaining control of Congress.

The short list of states in which a win or two could make a difference, according to data from the National Council of State Legislatures, includes: Arizona, Connecticut, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

An analysis of available campaign-contribution data by the National Institute on Money in State Politics has found that the Republican Party began its war early and has had a decided advantage going into the 2000 elections.

The contribution data analyzed was drawn from two primary sources -- the Federal Election Commission, which discloses contributions from national parties and sources to all 50 states (as well as contributions to candidates for federal office), and the National Institute on Money in State Politics' databases of state records, which show funds coming to state-level candidates and committees from all sources, including national parties and committees. The Institute's databases are based on public-disclosure records from state agencies; 26 completed state databases were used for this report. This report and underlying data will be updated regularly over the next 12 months, as new state and federal data is released and processed, and will be available on the Institute's web site.

Specifically, the Institute's analysis found:

### **Soft Money in 50 States**

- Republican Party committees so far in the 2000 cycle have received more soft money than their Democrat counterparts in 35 of 50 states, a rate similar to the one seen in 1998 when the ratio was 34 of 50.
- Early reports filed with the FEC for the 2000 cycle show the Republican Party sending soft money to the states at twice the rate of the Democrat Party. The GOP's advantage as

of August 1999 was \$1.93 million. The Republican Party total was \$3.81 million to the Democrat's \$1.88 million.

- In 1998, the Republican Party's soft-money total to states was \$6.7 million more than the Democrat Party's total: \$45.4 million to \$38.6 million, respectively.

### **Hard Money in 26 States**

- In the 1998 election cycle, party committees put more than \$75 million in hard money into the campaigns of state-level candidates in 26 states. Republican Party committees contributed more than \$45.9 million of the total, Democrat committees \$29.7 million;
- Republican committees gave more in contributions in 23 of the 26 states, 10 of whose legislatures were controlled by Democrats.
- Democrat committees gave more to candidates in three states, all Democrat controlled, but the funding margin was just \$412,000 over what Republican committees contributed.
- National party committees gave more than \$9.6 million directly to candidates in the 26 states studied. Republicans gave nearly twice as much as Democrats, \$6.15 million to \$3.47 million.

### **Flow of Soft Money into 50 States**

An astounding amount of cash flows from the national parties to state affiliates every election cycle in the form of what is commonly known as "soft money", or national party money that can only be used for "party building" purposes and not directly by candidates. Soft-money contributions also are not subject to federal contribution limits.

Since 1996, both major parties have funneled more than \$200 million to state parties, according to Federal Election Commission data from all 50 states. California alone has received more than \$26 million.

An analysis of the soft-money data by the Institute shows that the national Republican Party is on course for the 2000 elections to funnel dramatically more money to its state affiliates than the Democrat Party.

As of August 1999, FEC reports show both parties writing checks to the states totaling more than \$5.69 million, with more than two-thirds, or \$3,811,690, going to Republican Party committees. In all, GOP committees have received more soft money so far than Democrat Party committees in 35 of 50 states. This pattern is similar to the one seen in 1998, when Republican Party committees in 34 of 50 states received more soft money than Democrat committees. Republican soft money in 1998 amounted to \$45.4 million, and was \$6.7 million more than that contributed by Democrats, who gave their state affiliates \$38.6 million.

Since 1996, when the Democrats last spread more soft money than Republicans, more than 19 states have seen a shift from Democrat soft-money dominance to Republican; 14 states have remained staunchly Republican, and only four have remained staunchly Democrat.

States consistently targeted by the national Republicans Party's soft money include: Georgia, Tennessee, New Mexico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Nebraska, Arizona, Utah, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Vermont, Delaware, North Dakota and Rhode Island. The four states favored with Democrat Party soft money most consistently are: Ohio, Washington, Louisiana and Montana.

## **26 State Analysis of Hard-Money Contributions**

An Institute analysis of party committee contributions to state-level candidates in 26 states during the 1998 election cycle found that Republican Party committees funneled \$16.2 million more to their candidates than did similar Democrat committees. These hard-money contributions can be given directly to candidates for their campaigns and are subject to contribution-limits laws.

Overall, the party committees contributed more than \$75.6 million to candidates in the 26 states studied. The Institute looked at all contributions from official party committees, national and state-level, to candidates, understanding that the federal committees often funnel contributions to the state committees, which in turn contribute additional dollars to candidates.

Democrat Party committees gave more money to state-level candidates than did Republican committees in only three of the 26 states studied: Connecticut, Indiana and Kansas. The Democrat Party committee advantage in those states amounted to \$412,000.

In the remaining 23 states, Republican Party committees' contribution margin over Democrat committees was \$16,673,218, and ranged from highs of \$4.9 million in Ohio, \$2.7 million in Michigan and \$1.4 million in Iowa, down to \$11,500 in Maine and \$14,428 in Montana.

More than 44 percent of the hard money went to candidates running in open seats, or races in which no incumbent was running; 30.4 percent went to incumbents; and 23.6 percent went to candidates challenging incumbents. In each instance, Republicans received significantly more money than did Democrat candidates:

- In contests for open seats, Republican candidates received \$19,261,223 and Democrats \$13,515,131.
- Incumbent Republicans received twice as much in hard-money contributions as did Democrat incumbents, \$15,048,109 to \$7,781,943 respectively. (Within this category were 12 House incumbents who ran for open Senate seats, which is often a result of term limits. Six were Democrats and 6 were Republicans. But Republicans got a disproportionate amount of the hard-money contributions: 89.1 percent, or \$522,072 split between six candidates, as opposed to \$63,287 split between the six Democrats.)
- And Republican candidates challenging incumbents received \$10,254,196 in hard money while Democrats received \$7,657,548.

While Republicans did receive more in hard-money contributions, their numbers also were greater, so they had to divide it more ways. Of the 1,945 Republicans who received hard-money contributions, 478 ran in open races; 851 were incumbents; and 616 were challengers. In all, 1,764 Democrats received hard-money contributions: 443 in open races; 764 incumbents; and 557 challengers.

The Republican Party's advantage in its battle for control of redistricting is perhaps most clearly seen in an analysis of the legislatures in the 26 states studied. Democrats controlled the legislatures in nine, Republicans 11 and six were split.

- In the Democrat-controlled states, the Republican Party committees contributed \$2 million more to its candidates than did the Democrat Party committees. (\$10,733,709 D vs. \$12,740,748 R)
- In Republican-controlled states, the fund-raising margin enjoyed by Republicans was even greater: \$11.2 million. (\$9,249,204 D vs. \$20,516,994 R)
- And in states where control of the legislature is split between the parties, Republicans gave candidates \$2,986,413 more than Democrats gave candidates. (\$9,741,768 D vs. \$12,728,181 R).

The states studied, with the controlling party and totals contributed by the major party committees, include:

State	Legislative Control	\$Control	1998 D\$	1998 R\$
Connecticut	Democrat	D	\$468,439	\$257,285
Kansas	Republican	D	\$151,835	\$133,317
Indiana	Republican	D	\$1,320,550	\$1,138,247
<b>Democrat Advantage</b>		<b>D</b>	<b>\$1,940,823</b>	<b>\$1,528,848</b>
California	Democrat	R	\$9,146,114	\$10,203,147
Hawaii	Democrat	R	\$8,800	\$224,530
Maine	Democrat	R	\$261,681	\$273,181
Massachusetts	Democrat	R	\$46,557	\$143,901
Missouri	Democrat	R	\$293,756	\$873,615
New Mexico	Democrat	R	\$385,137	\$486,054
Vermont	Democrat	R	\$110,488	\$216,348
West Virginia	Democrat	R	\$12,736	\$62,687
Arizona	Republican	R	\$26,995	\$291,844
Florida	Republican	R	\$3,220,097	\$4,632,763

Idaho	Republican	R	\$46,869	\$108,493
Iowa	Republican	R	\$576,502	\$2,046,574
Michigan	Republican	R	\$573,684	\$3,305,023
Montana	Republican	R	\$18,000	\$32,428
Ohio	Republican	R	\$4,069,432	\$8,999,336
Oregon	Republican	R	\$473,217	\$773,383
Utah	Republican	R	\$86,518	\$157,834
Wyoming	Republican	R	\$6,056	\$36,000
Illinois	Republican	R	\$5,678,996	\$7,446,092
Minnesota	Democrat	R	\$267,864	\$356,648
Nevada	Republican	R	\$376,990	\$408,157
Texas	Republican	R	\$1,953,339	\$3,112,100
Wisconsin	Democrat	R	\$144,029	\$266,937
<b>Republican Advantage</b>		<b>R</b>	<b>\$27,783,857</b>	<b>\$44,457,075</b>
<b>PAC Totals</b>			<b>\$29,724,680</b>	<b>\$45,985,923</b>

### National Hard-Money Contributions in 26 States

Of the total contributed to state-level candidates by the major party committees in the 1998 election cycle in the 26 states studied, more than \$9.3 million came directly from national organizations, such as the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee or the National Republican Congressional Committee.

The Republican Party committees contributed nearly twice as much to candidates as did the Democrat Party committees, \$6.05 million compared to \$3.29 million. Contributions to 3,768 state-level candidates were analyzed.

The average amount given by a Republican Party committee to its candidates was \$18,363, and more than 50 candidates received amounts of \$10,000 or more from single committees. Contributions ranged to a high of \$1.4 million by the National Republican Senatorial Committee to California gubernatorial candidate Dan Lungren. Lungren also received of \$1,295,000 from the Republican National Committee and \$250,000 from the National Republican Congressional Committee.

The average given by Democrat Party committees was \$15,036, and 58 were \$10,000 or above. California Gov. Gray Davis lead the Democrat Party contribution list with the Democrat Governors Association contributing a total of \$570,000.

The national Republican committees were:

- GOPAC \$41,818
- National Republican Congressional Cmte \$1,152,075
- National Republican Senatorial Cmte \$1,418,500
- Republican National Cmte \$1,641,800
- Republican National State Elections Cmte \$1,802,025

The national Democrat committees contributing were, with an amount given:

- Democrat Governors Assoc \$909,250
- Democrat Legislative Campaign Cmte \$619,220
- Democrat Senatorial Campaign Cmte \$997,830
- Democrat Congressional Campaign Cmte \$614,017
- Democrat National Cmte \$159,867

While the amount of contributions that came to candidates directly from national party committees represented only 12.6 percent of the overall amount given by party committees, national dollars were an indication that the race was a priority, and that state party dollars also would be contributed. Of the 3,775 campaigns analyzed, roughly 11 percent or 419 received national party committee contributions. In six states, no national party money was contributed.

In most cases, if a candidate got national committee money, he or she also received sizable contributions from state-level committees, too.

For example, Joe Baca, a Democrat candidate for California Senate District 32, received:

- \$100,000 from the Democrat Senatorial Campaign Committee,
- \$40,410 from the California State Democrat Central Committee,
- \$22,192 from the Senate Democrat Leadership Fund,
- \$15,000 from the Democrat Congressional Campaign Committee,

Or, Lee Daniels, a Republican candidate for Illinois House District 46, who received:

- \$125,000 from the National Republican Congressional Committee,
- \$300,000 from the Illinois House Republican Campaign Committee,
- \$1,000 from the Dupage County Federation of Republicans,
- \$600 from the Addison township Republicans,
- \$250 from the 41st Ward Republicans.

This pattern of contributions from multiple sources was seen in 88.6 percent or 392 of the 442 campaigns analyzed.

The states analyzed, with the number of candidates that received national party committee contributions and a total from those committees, include:

<b>StateYear</b>	<b>Democrat Count</b>	<b>Democrat Total</b>	<b>Republican Count</b>	<b>Republican Total</b>
AZ98	1	\$100	2	\$70,270
CA98	70	\$2,235,505	19	\$3,365,000
FL98	24	\$00	0	\$00
HI98	0	\$00	5	\$30,000
IA98	25	\$185,500	67	\$399,600
ID98	0	\$00	1	\$5,000
IL98	9	\$27,033	5	\$375,000
IN98	2	\$63,500	19	\$32,314
KS98	0	\$00	1	\$2,000
MA98	0	\$00	1	\$300
ME98	41	\$52,570	41	\$109,050
MI98	4	\$00	5	\$29,000
MN98	1	\$500	5	\$2,500
MO98	15	\$6,975	73	\$214,255
NM98	18	\$229,750	11	\$345,000
NV98	20	\$130,000	38	\$108,064
OH98	14	\$149,750	19	\$707,000
OR98	20	\$10,000	12	\$120,000
TX98	24	\$176,000	13	\$64,715
VT98	3	\$3,000	67	\$76,750
	293	\$3,270,183	404	\$6,055,818

### **Soft Money Debate Rages**



Soft money, it's a buzzword nowadays for all that's wrong with the nation's political system. Special interests or individuals that have given the maximum amount directly to candidates, turn around and write enormous checks to the national parties and, with a wink and a nod, are assured that that money will be used for "party-building" activities only, as required by law. But all involved know that a huge portion of the money will go to support the party's candidate de jour in so-called "issue advertising". They're working the system, and making it work for them.

It's all perfectly legal, thanks to the soft-money loophole written into campaign-finance laws that came out of the Nixon-Watergate era. It must be bad, though, otherwise why have all four major candidates for presidency in 2000 called for reducing or banning soft-money contributions? Why has Congress spent thousands of hours over the past 12 years debating campaign-finance reform and the soft-money loophole?

The debate continues over who can out-reform whom, all the while the checks keep coming in -- more than \$697 million to the two political parties over the last nine years, according to the Campaign Study Group. Expect a record amount of soft money to be contributed in the 2000 election cycle as the candidates vie for the 'reformer' label, and as Gore prepares for an all-out general-election assault.

As the debate escalates and the cash keeps flowing, only the public will be at a loss. Tracking who gives soft money, where it goes after the check is cashed, and who actually spends the cash and on what, is difficult to know. For most of the public, it's impossible. And because national party committees often funnel this money to state committees, which trade soft money for hard money to give to candidates, the money trail becomes even more difficult to follow.