

## Spending on U.S. House and U.S. Senate advertising approaches \$200M in last five weeks, \$367M total since Jan 1

### Influx of Party Spending Indicates House is the True Battleground; IGs Spending Over \$65 Million in Federal & Gov Races

(MIDDLETOWN, CT --) An estimated \$198M has been spent on advertising in U.S. Senate and U.S. House races in the five weeks between 9/1 and 10/7. With September as the traditional start to the general election season, the 75 percent increase in spending (from \$113M during the same period in 2008) includes an 84 percent spending increase in U.S. Senate races and a 65 percent increase in U.S. House ads.

**Table 1: Advertising in U.S. Senate Races 9/1-10/7\***

Year		Candidate	Party	Interest Group	Coordinated	Total
2008	Ads Aired	88,038	42,360	27,649	3,222	161,269
	Row %	54.59%	26.27%	17.14%	2.00%	
	Cost	\$30,364,125	\$18,434,420	\$12,335,586	\$1,049,463	\$62,183,594
2010	Ads Aired	142,514	16,497	28,706	14,422	202,139
	Row %	70.50%	8.16%	14.20%	7.13%	
	Cost	\$74,664,670	\$7,214,370	\$23,676,940	\$9,084,860	\$114,640,840
	% volume increase	61.88%	-61.06%	3.82%	347.61%	25.34%
	% spending increase	145.90%	-60.86%	91.94%	765.67%	84.36%

\*Amounts may include primary advertising.

**Table 2: Advertising in U.S. House Races 9/1-10/7\***

Year		Candidate	Party	Interest Group	Coordinated	Total
2008	Ads Aired	95,029	15,598	7,004	3,148	120,779
	Row %	78.68%	12.91%	5.80%	2.61%	
	Cost	\$37,285,123	\$7,887,159	\$4,581,242	\$1,013,550	\$50,767,074
2010	Ads Aired	144,476	22,860	20,647	10,882	198,865
	Row %	72.65%	11.50%	10.38%	5.47%	
	Cost	\$58,462,930	\$8,608,380	\$13,369,060	\$3,545,990	\$83,986,360
	% volume increase	52.03%	46.56%	194.79%	245.68%	64.65%
	% spending increase	56.80%	9.14%	191.82%	249.86%	65.43%

\*Amounts may include primary advertising.

CITE SOURCE OF DATA IN ALL TABLES AS:

Kantar Media/CMAG with analysis by the Wesleyan Media Project

“The increase in activity continues to be driven largely by candidates, but the interest group and party/coordinated spending difference between House and Senate races

indicate that both sides believe the House is the true battleground,” said Michael Franz, associate professor of government at Bowdoin College and co-director of the Wesleyan Media Project. “Party spending is up in the House, especially if we add in coordinated spending, while the reverse is true in the Senate where party spending is way down even if we account for the significant increase in coordinated spending.”

Interest group spending tells a similar story. Although interest group airings and spending are up across the board, there are big differences between the investments being made in House versus Senate races. Interest group activity has nearly doubled in U.S. House races.

“The evidence is clear: the focus right now is on control of the House. Both parties and interest groups are taking aim at key House districts races, flooding the airwaves in hopes of gaining at the margin,” said Erika Franklin Fowler, assistant professor of government at Wesleyan University and co-director of the Wesleyan Media Project. “If you account for the overall proportion of airings, interest group activity in U.S. Senate races actually fell in comparison to 2008.” (The higher interest group spending totals in the Senate are explained by groups in 2010 spending in more expensive media markets than in 2008.)

Candidates in federal races have spent roughly \$130M and Democrats have a 1.5:1 advantage in that spending. However, between 9/1 and 10/7, almost \$65M has been spent by interest groups in key federal and gubernatorial races.

“Breaking down the air war by party reveals big advantages to Republicans in both party and interest group investment in federal races,” said Franz. “Combining party and coordinated totals, Republicans are outspending Democrats by almost 3 to 2. Among interest group spenders, Republican-leaning organizations are outspending Democrats by a margin of almost 9:1 in House and Senate contests.”

Table 3 displays the top 10 interest group spenders in all races, including Senate, House and gubernatorial. Listed are the type of organization, number of ad airings and party affiliation (for a list of the top 30 along with more information about which races each is active in, see <http://election-ad.research.wesleyan.edu/press-releases/>, look for the link to the XML file). Among the top 10 interest group spenders, Republican-leaning organizations outspent Democratic ones by a margin of over 10:1. Furthermore, 4 of the top 10 group spenders are non-profit 501(c)(4), 501(c)(5), or 501(c)(6) organizations, which are not required to disclose their donors.

“We continue to see evidence of large spending by non-profits that if nothing else are profiting from protections that do not require them to disclose their donors,” Fowler said.

**Table 3: Top 10 Interest Group Spenders by Volume and Ad Count (9/1-10/7)\***

<b>Name</b>	<b>Group Type**</b>	<b>Estimated Spending</b>	<b>Spot Count</b>	<b>Party Lean</b>
Republican Governor's Association	527	\$11,776,920	16945	Republican
US Chamber of Commerce	501(c)(6)	\$9,051,370	8711	Republican
American Crossroads	Independent Expenditure Committee	\$5,493,670	7089	Republican
Crossroads Grassroots Policy Strategies	501(c)(4)	\$4,981,160	5723	Republican
60 Plus Association	501(c)(4)	\$3,792,200	4802	Republican
American Future Fund	Independent Expenditure Committee	\$2,544,210	4569	Republican
Bay State Future	527	\$2,167,850	1146	Democrat
Americans for Job Security	501(c)(6)	\$1,918,430	3327	Republican
Citizens for Strength and Security	527	\$1,874,750	1073	Democrat
Club for Growth	Independent Expenditure Committee	\$1,821,070	2276	Republican

\*Amounts may include some primary race advertising.

\*\*Groups often have more than one classification through which they conduct their political or election-related activities. The entry in this table reflects our best guess as to what organizational form funded the ads. The group type assignment may not be completely accurate because the ad disclaimers do not signify the tax entity through which the parent organization funded the ad buy.

\*\*\*For a table of the Top 30 Spenders, see: <http://election-ad.research.wesleyan.edu/press-releases/> (look for the link to download the XML file).

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Top races in the battle for the U.S. Senate include the California race (almost \$13M), the three-way Florida contest weighing in at roughly \$11M in ad spending and over 16,400 airings, Illinois' contest at \$10M and Pennsylvania's Toomey vs. Sestak race at just over \$9M. Democrats had an advantage in terms of total ad airings in 4 of those races; Republicans had an advantage in 6.

**Table 4: Top US Senate Races in 2010 by Spending (9/1-10/7)\***

State	Total spending	Total Ads**	Pro-Dem Ads	Pro-GOP Ads
CA	\$12,913,820	10,719	6,044	4,675
FL***	\$10,946,810	16,409	3,813	6,736
IL	\$10,370,700	10,287	5,358	4,928
PA	\$9,248,720	13,253	5,837	7,416
NV	\$7,850,000	17,777	10,184	6,909
CO	\$7,607,590	14,207	6,810	7,397
WI	\$7,426,400	18,256	7,817	10,439
CT	\$7,390,870	5,548	1,728	3,770
MO	\$6,248,070	15,971	4,993	10,978
WA	\$5,523,810	11,750	6,833	4,917

\*Amounts may include some primary advertising.

\*\*Party totals do not always add up to overall total due to the presence of third-party candidates and/or an indeterminate party beneficiary.

\*\*\*Total spending and total ad columns include numbers for independent Charlie Crist.

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Top House races are Michigan's 7th district, Minnesota's 6th and Nevada's 3rd, all of which broke the \$2M mark in estimated spending in the five weeks following Sept. 1.

**Table 5: Top House Races in 2010 by Spending (9/1-10/7)\***

State	District	Total spending	Total Ads**	Pro-Dem Ads	Pro-GOP Ads
MI	7	\$ 2,572,570	6,338	3,752	2,586
MN	6	\$ 2,203,120	3,035	1,487	1,548
NV	3	\$ 2,127,300	3,149	1,838	1,311
AZ	5	\$ 1,865,730	2,300	1,225	1,075
IL	11	\$ 1,814,980	832	828	4
MD	1	\$ 1,761,650	3,501	2,495	1,006
SC	5	\$ 1,691,410	4,408	2,235	2,173
OH	16	\$ 1,682,550	2,716	1,411	1,305
FL	22	\$ 1,677,560	2,742	1,360	1,382
VA	9	\$ 1,597,050	4,243	2,443	1,800

\*Amounts include both general election and primary advertising.

\*\*Party totals do not always add up to overall total due to the presence of third party candidates and/or an indeterminate party beneficiary.

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“Given the record spending this year, one has to wonder whether the campaigns have no-limit credit cards,” said Travis Ridout, co-director of the Wesleyan Media Project and associate professor of political science at Washington State University. “Candidate spending is up, and independent group spending is up. Spending is up in House races, and spending is up in Senate races. With all of the ads showing up on their television screens, many Americans must be thinking that it is already the first week of November.”

The Wesleyan Media Project provides real-time tracking and analysis of all political television advertising in real-time. Housed in Wesleyan's Quantitative Analysis Center – part of the Allbritton Center for the Study of Public Life – the Wesleyan Media Project is the successor to the Wisconsin Advertising Project, which disbanded in 2009. It is directed by Erika Franklin Fowler, assistant professor of government at Wesleyan University and her collaborators Michael M. Franz, associate professor of government at Bowdoin College and Travis N. Ridout, associate professor of political science at Washington State University.

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The Wesleyan Media Project's website can be found here:  
<http://election-ad.research.wesleyan.edu/>

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