

# GET BIG MONEY OUT OF OREGON POLITICS!

**When it comes to campaign finance reform, Oregon is last, dead last! Oregon is one of only 5 states with NO LIMITS on political campaign contributions for any state or local race. None!**



***What Tom Delay did in Texas is perfectly legal in Oregon.***

The result is that **corporations dominate politics in Oregon**. They outspend labor unions by 5-1 and massively outspend all other groups and causes, including those for better health care, environmental protection, human and civil rights, decent and living wage jobs for all, consumer protection, fair taxes on corporations, less promotion of gambling, and sufficient funding for education and other needs.

Corporations pushed up the total reported spending on political races in Oregon from \$4.2 million in 1996 to \$42 million in 2002 – **a factor of 10 in 6 years**. Candidates for seats in the Oregon Legislature in 1996 spent \$3.5 million. By 2004, they spent \$18 million. **75% of the money came from only 1% of the contributors**. Only 3% of the contributions were in amounts of \$50 or less. It now typically costs over \$500,000 to win a contested seat in the State Senate and over \$250,000 to win such a seat in the State House of Representatives.

Legislative candidates who spent the most money won 91% of the time. **Corporate contributions are so huge in Oregon that Tom Delay would not even be noticed here**. He was indicted for channeling \$190,000 of corporate money into races for the Texas Legislature. Doing that would be legal in Oregon and insignificant, since the corporations have pumped over \$20 million into races for the Oregon Legislature in the last two election cycles.

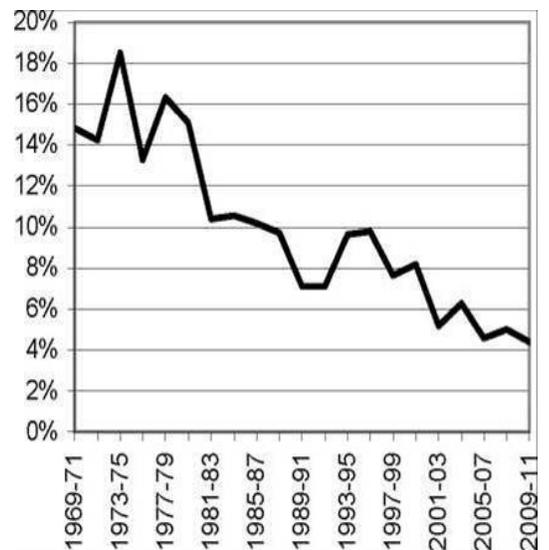
Candidates for Oregon Governor in 2002 raised and spent over \$15 million, breaking the old record by more than double. Each major party candidate spent over \$4 million. Their cash from the corporations was joined by huge “donations” from rich business executives. Candidate Kevin Mannix alone received over \$1.2 million from just 6 corporate executives (of mainly timber and medical equipment corporations).

## **Big political spenders get what they want from Oregon government.**

### **Corporate Taxes:**

The Council on State Taxation (2005) reports that Oregon ranks 47th among states in business taxes per dollar of economic activity. In 1975, corporations paid over 18 percent of Oregon's income taxes; now they pay about 4 percent. In September 2005 the corporations got another 36% cut to their 2005 Oregon income taxes due to the “kicker,” which is expected to reduce their 2006-07 income taxes by yet another 54%. Half of these cuts go to just 50 large corporations.

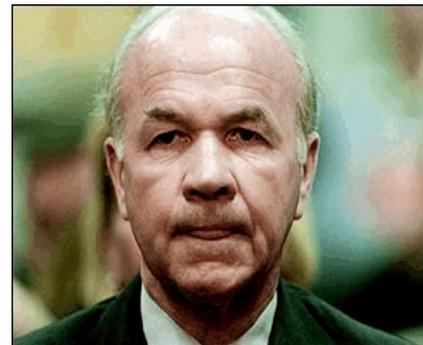
Instead, Oregon taxes the working poor: Oregon has the 2nd highest income taxes in U.S. for family of 4 at 125% of the poverty line.



***The corporation share of Oregon income taxes has declined from 18% to only 4%***

## Electric Utilities, including PGE (Enron):

PGE/Enron in 2001 was granted the largest electricity rate increase in Oregon history, over \$400 million per year. The Oregon Public Utility Commission (OPUC), headed by a long-time paid consultant to PGE, said PGE/Enron needed to pay for sky-high power contracts it signed during 2000-01, when Enron and others were illegally manipulating the entire West Coast energy market to inflate power prices (with the help of PGE, said federal regulators). PGE rates are 35% higher than the government-owned electric utilities in Oregon, and now PGE wants another 9% rate increase.



*Ken Lay liked Oregon so much, Enron reincorporated here in 1997.*

**The OPUC also refuses to make PGE return any of the \$800 million PGE has charged Oregon ratepayers since 1997 for “federal and state income taxes” that have never been paid.** This outrage by PGE, PP&L, and other Oregon "regulated" private utilities continues right now -- at over \$150 million per year in phony charges to Oregon ratepayers for “income taxes.”

Despite a court order, the OPUC refuses to make PGE refund any of the \$500 million charged Oregon ratepayers during 1995-2000 for profits on the Trojan nuclear plant, after the plant completely broke down in 1992. These profits are on top of having ratepayers cover all of the cost of the plant and the cost of decommissioning and radioactive waste storage and disposal.

**Why? The Public Utility Commission is appointed by politicians, and PGE/Enron has contributed over \$500,000 to candidates for the Oregon Legislature and both parties.**

**Many more examples are available at ([www.oregonfollowthemoney.org](http://www.oregonfollowthemoney.org)), which shows how tobacco, accounting, pharmaceutical, “payday loaners” and other corporations have had their way with the Oregon Legislature.**

## Restaurants, Bars, Gambling:

In 2004, the Oregon Lottery Commission signed new contracts to keep paying video poker outlets twice as much as necessary, letting them keep an extra \$85 million per year that should be going to schools (even before adding video slots increased their take yet again). The Commission decided to reduce commissions by only 3%.

**Why? The Lottery Commission is appointed by politicians, and the Oregon Restaurant Association contributed over \$1,200,000 to them in the last 3 elections.**

## HELP GET CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM ON THE OREGON BALLOT, NOW

Petition 8 is a constitutional amendment that allows limits on campaign contributions in Oregon. We need this, because the Oregon Supreme Court in 1997 ruled that the Oregon Constitution now does not allow any limits on political contributions in any race for state or local public office.

Petition 37 is a statute that would enact a comprehensive system of campaign finance reform for candidate elections, including a ban on corporate contributions and limits on individual contributions to \$500 in any statewide race and \$100 in any non-statewide race. It allows unlimited contributions by Small Donor Committees that combine donations from individuals of \$50 or less per year.

**[Join our endorsers](#), including the Sierra Club, Alliance for Democracy, OSPIRG, Pacific Green Party, Clackamas County Democratic Party, Health Care for All Oregon, Oregon Gray Panthers, and many others.**

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