

Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance

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Ballot question committees break spending records in 2014

Ballot question committees spent \$30.2 million on four propositions in 2014, shattering the previous record of \$16.1 million set in 1992, according to an OCPF review of ballot question fundraising and spending.

OCPF's review covered fundraising and spending for four questions that appeared on the 2014 statewide ballot:

- Question 1:** Eliminating gas tax indexing (passed).
- Question 2:** Expanding the beverage container deposit law (failed).
- Question 3:** Expanding prohibitions on gaming (failed).
- Question 4:** Earned sick time for employees (passed).

More than half of the \$30.2 million total was spent on **Question 3** to expand prohibitions on casino gaming. Two proponents and two opponents spent \$15,538,072 on the question, a new record for a single proposition. The previous record was set in 2006, when \$13 million was spent on a question regarding wine sales in grocery stores.

The bulk of spending on Question 3 came from a single ballot question committee, Coalition to Protect Mass. Jobs, which reported \$14.7 million in spending. The committee's top donors were gaming companies – Penn National Gaming (\$6.7 million); MGM Resorts International (\$5.3 million); and Wynn Resorts (\$3 million).

Supporters of Question 3 spent nearly \$700,000, led by the Repeal the Casino Deal Committee, which received most of its contributions from individuals.

More than \$10.7 million was spent to support or oppose **Question 2**, the bottle bill question. That is more than was spent on all three ballot questions in 2012.

The No on Question 2: Stop Forced Deposits Committee reported \$9.2 million in expenditures to oppose the question. The American Beverage Association was the primary donor, making \$8.2 million in contributions.

The Coalition for an Updated Bottle Bill Committee reported \$1.3 million in expenditures to support Question 2. Its top contributors were the Massachusetts Sierra Club (\$755,852); and the Elm Action Fund (\$495,000).

A total of \$2.8 million was spent to support or oppose **Question 1**, concerning gas tax indexing.

Most of the expenditures on Question 1 were made by the No on One Committee, which reported \$2.7 million to oppose the question. The top contributors were the Construction Industries of Massachusetts (\$529,361); and the CIM Advancement Fund (\$300,000).

The Committee to Tank the Automatic Gas Tax Hikes reported \$63,048 in expenditures to support Question 1. It was funded mostly by individuals.

Committees supporting or opposing **Question 4** reported \$1.1 million in expenditures, most of which was reported by the Raise Up Massachusetts Committee (\$1,073,209), which supported the proposition. Various SEIU union organizations reported \$915,809 in contributions to the committee. On the opposing side, the No on 4 Committee reported \$47,500 in expenditures.

The figures in this study are based on reports filed by committees covering the period through Dec. 31, and are subject to change due to any subsequent corrections, deletions or additions made as a result of any review conducted by OCPF or amendments filed by committees.

In addition to the fundraising and spending reported by ballot question committees, businesses and other groups reported a total of \$254,128 in spending that was independent of any ballot question committee.

Reports filed by each of the committees may be found on OCPF's Electronic Filing System, a searchable database accessible on the office's website at www.ocpf.us.

A breakdown of activity for each question follows.

Campaign Finance Activity for the 2014 Statewide Ballot Questions

Totals include receipts and expenditures by each ballot question committee organized with OCPF for 2013 and 2014. In most instances, the committee organized during 2014.

Question 1: Eliminating gas tax indexing (passed)

Committee	Receipts	Expenditures	In-Kind Contributions	Liabilities
	<i>Support</i>			
Committee to Tank the Automatic Gas Tax Hikes	\$53,969	\$63,048	\$6,648	--
Yes on 1 for Accountability	--	--	--	--
<i>Totals in favor</i>	\$53,969	\$63,048	\$6,648	--
	<i>Oppose</i>			
No on One Committee	\$2,713,301	\$2,707,839	\$243,068	\$444,771
<i>Totals in opposition</i>	\$2,713,301	\$2,707,839	\$243,068	\$444,771
<i>Question 1 Totals</i>	\$2,767,270	\$2,770,887	\$249,716	\$444,771

Yes Vote: 1,095,229

No Vote: 972,271

Question 2: Expanding the beverage container deposit law (failed)

Committee	Receipts	Expenditures	In-Kind Contributions	Liabilities
	<i>Support</i>			
Coalition for an Updated Bottle Bill	\$1,368,191	\$1,360,231	\$5,210	--
Update the Bottle Bill	--	--	\$80,839	--
Mass Sierra Club Bottle Bill Committee	\$145,256	\$143,422	--	--
<i>Totals in favor</i>	\$1,513,447	\$1,503,653	\$86,049	--
	<i>Oppose</i>			
No on Question 2: Stop Forced Deposits	\$9,351,788	\$9,259,945	\$276,259	\$35,830
<i>Totals in opposition</i>	\$9,351,788	\$9,259,945	\$276,259	--
<i>Question 2 Totals</i>	\$10,865,235	\$10,763,598	\$362,308	\$35,830

Yes Vote: 564,381

No Vote: 1,561,591

Question 3: Expanding prohibitions on gaming (failed)

Committee	Receipts	Expenditures	In-Kind Contributions	Liabilities
	<i>Support</i>			
Repeal the Casino Deal Committee	\$700,472	\$694,066	\$159,615	\$268,319
Yes on Three Massachusetts	--	--	\$1,060	--
<i>Total expenditures in favor</i>	\$700,472	\$694,066	\$160,675	\$268,319
	<i>Oppose</i>			
Coalition to Protect Mass Jobs	\$14,920,695	\$14,677,472	\$162,052	--
Everett United	\$200,020	\$166,534	\$81,375	--
<i>Total expenditures in opposition</i>	\$15,120,715	\$14,844,006	\$243,427	--
<i>Question 3 Total</i>	\$15,821,187	\$15,538,072	\$404,102	\$268,319

Yes Vote: 845,880

No Vote: 1,271,404

Question 4: Earned sick time for employees (passed)

Committee	Receipts	Expenditures	In-Kind Contributions	Liabilities
	<i>Support</i>			
Raise up Massachusetts	\$1,075,457	\$1,073,209	\$959,200	--
<i>Total expenditures in favor</i>	\$1,075,457	\$1,073,209	\$959,200	
	<i>Oppose</i>			
No on 4 Committee	\$47,500	\$47,500	\$9,041	--
<i>Total expenditures in opposition</i>	\$47,500	\$47,500	\$9,041	--
<i>Question 3 Total</i>	\$1,122,957	\$1,120,709	\$968,241	--

Yes Vote: 1,256,841

No Vote: 859,621

Statewide Ballot Question Expenditures

1988 – 2014

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Questions</i>	<i>Number of Committees</i>	<i>Total spent</i>
1988	4	18	\$13,317,952
1990	6	20	\$ 5,661,062
1992	4	8	\$16,139,661
1994	9	23	\$11,155,835
1996	1	3	\$1,210,777
1998	3	9	\$9,999,283
2000	8	16	\$15,340,199
2002	3	6	\$2,332,880
2006	3	6	\$15,320,327
2008	3	7	\$11,516,215
2010	3	9	\$9,098,307
2012	3	13	\$9,554,909
2014	4	13	\$30,193,266

Note: There were no questions on the statewide ballot in 2004.

End