



TOP 5 DONORS TO HAWAII STATE LEGISLATORS

November 10, 2015
Common Cause Hawaii



Through the Campaign Spending Commission's (CSC) [database of campaign contributions and expenditures](#), the public is able to access "valuable campaign information about candidates running for office in Hawaii and follow the campaign spending activities of political action committees, Super PACs, and ballot issue committees".¹

Utilizing this data, Common Cause Hawaii attempted to identify the "Top 5 Donors"/contributors,² those with the highest aggregate amount donated per election period, for each 2015 Hawaii State Legislator. See the accompanying [spreadsheet for data](#).

Goals:

The main goals in compiling this data were to answer the following questions:

1. Who are the "Top 5 Donors", based on the aggregate amount donated, for each 2015 Hawaii State Legislator, during the last completed [election period](#)?
2. What portion of the "Top 5 Donors" are constituents of the receiving legislator?
3. Are there donors who appear frequently across all "Top 5 Donors" lists?

About the Data Compiled:

For consistency across all offices, the data focused on aggregate totals for donations made during the last completed election period. Typically State Senators' election periods are 4 years long, and staggered, meaning "approximately half of state senate seats are up for re-election during the state's general elections that take place every two years".³ However, due to reapportionment in 2011, which is the process by which "new congressional and state legislative district boundaries are drawn,"⁴ all State Senators had to run for re-election in 2012. This created a 2 year election period for all Senators (either 2012 or 2014). The election period for all State Representatives is 2 years long and was unaffected by reapportionment. For a list of the last completed election periods for all 2015 Hawaii State Legislators see *Table 4 on page 5*.

To find contribution data for each legislator, the [raw data](#)⁵ from the CSC's [Candidate Data Visualization App](#) was filtered by the legislator's name, then filtered by the corresponding election period, then the aggregate amounts were sorted to be listed in descending order.

"Top 5 Donors" are those with the highest aggregate amount donated per election period. Donor names on the accompanying spreadsheet were copied verbatim as found in the raw data from the CSC's [Candidate Data Visualization App](#).

¹ "What We Do." State of Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission. Accessed June 11, 2015. <http://ags.hawaii.gov/campaign/files/2015/04/WhatWeDo.pdf>.

² The terms "donor" and "contributor" may be used interchangeably.

³ "Length of Terms of State Senators." Ballotpedia. Accessed June 26, 2015. http://ballotpedia.org/Length_of_terms_of_state_senators.

⁴ "Redistricting in Hawaii." Ballotpedia. Accessed August 20, 2015. http://ballotpedia.org/Redistricting_in_Hawaii

⁵ "Raw Data." State of Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission. Accessed June 1, 2015. <https://data.hawaii.gov/apps/campaignspending/rawdata/jexd-xbcg?regNo=CC10191&electionStart=2012-11-07T00:00:00&electionEnd=2014-11-04T00:00:00>



Data listed in the “% of donations from Individuals, Immediate Family, Other Entity, Other” column is from the CSC's [Candidate Data Visualization App](#).⁶ The percentages listed in this column are based on all donations made during the specified election period, not just the “Top 5 Donors”.

Zip codes were notated only for donors falling under the “Individual” or “Immediate Family” categories, using the addresses listed in the raw data from the [Candidate Data Visualization App](#). To determine whether or not an individual or immediate family member is a legislator’s constituent, their address was entered into the Hawaii State Legislature’s [“Find Legislators” application](#),⁷ which identified the corresponding State Legislators.

Findings:

1. For most legislators, there was no definitive list of “Top 5 Donors”. See *Table 1*.

Forty-three or 56.6% of all 76 Hawaii State Legislators have more than 5 “Top Donors”. This is because multiple donors contributed the same amount as each other. Only the first 5 “Top Donors” as listed in the raw data of the CSC’s [Candidate Data Visualization App](#) are on the listed in the accompanying “Top 5 Donors” spreadsheet.

Table 1

# of Representatives with more than 5 Top Donors	# of Senators with more than 5 Top Donors (2010-2012)	# of Senators with more than 5 Top Donors (2012-2014)
27 of 51 (52.9%)	8 of 13 (61.5%)	8 of 12 (66.7%)

2. We were unable to determine whether or not many of the individual or immediate family donors are constituents to the receiving legislator.

Many individual and immediate family donors listed addresses for P.O. Boxes or places of business, rather than their residence. Therefore, we were unable to identify donors’ residencies. However, based on the addresses provided, majority of individual or immediate family donors are not constituents to the legislator receiving the donation. See *Table 2 on page 3*.

⁶ “Candidate Data Visualization App.” Hawaii State Campaign Spending Commission. Accessed June 1, 2015. <https://data.hawaii.gov/apps/campaignspending>

⁷ “Find Legislators.” Hawaii State Legislature. Accessed June 1, 2015. <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/findleg.aspx?street=Enter%20Street%20Name>.

Table 2

Total # of Individual or Immediate Family donors for Representatives	# of Individual or Immediate Family donors who are constituents of the recipient Representatives	Total # of Individual or Immediate Family donors for Senators (2010-2012)	# of Individual or Immediate Family donors who are constituents of the recipient Senators (2010-2012)	Total # of Individual or Immediate Family donors for Senators (2012-2014)	# of Individual or Immediate Family donors who are constituents of the recipient Senators (2012-2014)
74 of 255 (29%)	3 of 74 (4%)	30 of 65 (46%)	5 of 30 (16.7%)	17 of 60 (28.3%)	4 of 17 (23.5%)

3. We were unable to determine if there are donors who appear frequently across all legislators’ “Top 5 Donors” list.

There are inconsistencies with the data reported to the CSC. This includes donor names having spelling errors/variations, use of nicknames, and donors of the same name being categorized as different types of entities. (Please see the next paragraph and *Table 3* for examples.) These issues with data integrity made it difficult to determine whether or not entities with similar names are one and the same, or entirely different.

For instance, the “Hawaii Operating Engineers” were among the “Top 5 Donors” for several State Representatives and Senators. Assuming it is the same entity, as one can see in *Table 3 on page 4*, contributions were attributed to multiple variations of their name.

In addition to their various aliases, the “Hawaii Operating Engineers” was categorized as both a “Noncandidate Committee” and “Other Entity”, which are not interchangeable terms. A noncandidate committee is defined as “an organization, association, party, or individual that has the purpose of making or receiving contributions, making expenditures, or incurring financial obligations to influence the nomination for election, or the election, of any candidate to office, or for or against any question or issue on the ballot”.⁸ Noncandidate committees must register with and report their campaign contributions and expenditures to the CSC. A donor categorized as “Other Entity” does not fall under the “Noncandidate Committee”, “Candidate Committee”, “Individual Donor”, or “Immediate Family” categories and is not subject to the same registration and reporting requirements as a noncandidate committee.

⁸ “Hawaii Revised Statutes §11-302 Definitions.” Hawaii State Legislature. Accessed August 20, 2015. http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol01_Ch0001-0042F/HRS0011/HRS_0011-0302.htm

Table 3: Name and Type of Entity Variations of the Hawaii Operating Engineers⁹

Donor Name ¹⁰	Type of Entity
HAWAII OPERATING ENGINEERS STABILIZATION FUND	Other Entity
HI Operating Engineers Stabilization Fund	Other Entity
HAWAII OPERATING ENGINEERS STABILIZATION	Noncandidate Committee
Hawaii Operating Engineers Industry	Noncandidate Committee
Hawaii Operating Engineers Industry	Other Entity
HAWAII OPERATING ENGINEERS INDUSTRY	Other Entity
HAWAII OPERATING ENGINEERS INDUSTRY, STABILIZATION	Other Entity
Hawaii Operating Engineers Industry Stabilization	Other Entity
Hawaii Operating Engineers Industry Statewide PAC	Other Entity
Hawaii Operating Engineers Industry Stabilization	Noncandidate Committee
Hawaii Operating Engineers Indi Stabalization Fund	Noncandidate Committee
Hawaii Operating Engineers Stabilization Fund	Noncandidate Committee

Conclusion

Due to many donors contributing the same amount as each other, individual and immediate family donors listing addresses for their P.O. Box or place of business rather than their residence, and data reporting inconsistencies, we were unable to answer our original questions, as posed in the “Goals” portion of this document.

By making campaign finance information available, the Campaign Spending Commission allows the public to “follow the money” and make “more informed decisions at the polls on Election Day.”¹¹ Campaign finance data that is currently available is a starting point, but new policies should be implemented to improve the quality and consistency of the data.

For example: when reporting contributions made by noncandidate committees, requiring candidate committees to list noncandidate committees’ CSC assigned registration number can help reduce confusion due to donor name typos and aliases. Additionally, requiring all individual and immediate family donors to report their residential address when making a contribution, can also improve data integrity by providing more accurate information as to candidates’ sources of funding.

With a clearer picture of candidates’ campaign finances, the public can better understand the full effect of money’s influence on politics.

⁹ This table was compiled from the State Representatives’ and Senators’ “Top 5 Donors” spreadsheet. It does not include name and type of entity variations for contributions that did not make the “Top 5” list.

¹⁰ “Donor Names” listed were copied verbatim from the Campaign Spending Commission’s database. This includes name variations and spelling errors.

¹¹ “What We Do.” State of Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission. Accessed June 11, 2015. <http://ags.hawaii.gov/campaign/files/2015/04/WhatWeDo.pdf>.

Table 4: Legislative Districts and Corresponding Election Periods

Senate 2012 Election Period- November 3, 2010-November 6, 2012	Senate 2014 Election Period- November 7, 2012-November 4, 2014	House Election period from November 7, 2012- November 4, 2014
S District 2 Puna, Ka'u	S District 1 Hilo	All House Districts
S District 5 Wailuku, Waihe'e, Kahului	S District 3 Kona, Ka'u	
S District 8 Kaua'i, Ni'ihau	S District 4 Hilo, Hamakua, Kohala, Waimea, Waikoloa, Kona	
S District 9 Hawai'i Kai, Kuli'ou'ou, Niu, 'Aina Haina, Wai'alaie-Kahala, Diamond Head	S District 6 South and West Maui	
S District 10 Kaimuki, Kapahulu, Palolo, Maunalani Heights, St. Louis Heights, Mo'ili'iili, Ala Wai	S District 7 Hana, East and Upcountry Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i, Kaho'olawe	
S District 11 Manoa, Makiki, Punchbowl, Papakolea	S District 12 Waikiki, Ala Moana, Kaka'ako, McCully, Mo'ili'iili	
S District 13 Liliha, Palama, Iwilei, Kalihi, Nu'uuanu, Pacific Heights, Pauoa, Lower Tantalus, Downtown	S District 16 Pearl City, Momilani, Pearlridge, 'Aiea, Royal Summit, 'Aiea Heights, Newtown, Waimalu, Halawa, Pearl Harbor	
S District 14 Kapalama, 'Alewa, Kalihi Valley, Ft. Shafter, Moanalua Gardens & Valley, portions of Halawa and 'Aiea	S District 17 Waipahu, Crestview, Manana, Pearl City, Pacific Palisades	
S District 15 Kalihi, Mapunapuna, Airport, Salt Lake, Aliamanu, Foster Village, Hickam, Pearl Harbor	S District 18 Mililani Town, portion of Waipi'o Gentry, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia	
S District 19 'Ewa Beach, Ocean Pointe, 'Ewa by Gentry, Iroquois Point, portion of 'Ewa Villages	S District 21 Kalaeloa, Honokai Hale, Ko 'Olina, Nanakuli, Ma'ili, Wai'anae, Makaha, Makua	
S District 20 Kapolei, Makakilo, and portions of 'Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu	S District 23 Kane'ohe , Ka'a'awa, Hau'ula, La'ie, Kahuku, Waialua, Hale'iwa, Wahiawa, Schofield Barracks, Kunia	
S District 22 Mililani Mauka, Waipi'o Acres, Wheeler, Wahiawa, Whitmore Village, portion of Poamoho	S District 24 Kane'ohe, Kane'ohe MCAB, Kailua, He'eia, 'Ahuimanu	
S District 25 Kailua, Lanikai, Enchanted Lake, Keolu Hills, Maunawili, Waimanalo, Hawai'i Kai, Portlock		

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