



P.O. Box 2723  
Portland, OR 97208-2723  
503/283-1922  
503/283-1877 (fax)  
[www.commoncause.org/oregon](http://www.commoncause.org/oregon)

## **Voter-Owned Elections: Improving Portland Politics – 2006-2010**

### **Executive Summary**

Voter-Owned Elections, adopted in 2005, has improved Portland politics, especially in comparison to a history of domination of political fundraising by major contributors.

Voter-Owned Elections are:

**\*Reducing campaign spending:**

For example, spending was reduced by 37 percent between the 2004 mayoral primary before Voter-Owned Elections compared to the first post- reform mayoral primary in 2008.

**\*Reducing special interest influence – large contributions now rare:**

Due to Voter-Owned Elections, large contributions of \$1,000 or \$5,000 or more are largely a thing of the past. Even non-participating candidates are typically limiting the size of their contributions to less than \$500. For example, in one candidate's pre-Voter-Owned Elections campaigns, contributions over \$500 represented 72 and 55 percent of total fundraising. In two races after adoption of the reform program, only 10 percent and 8 percent of this incumbent's total fundraising was comprised of contributions larger than \$500.

**\*Reducing special interest influence – average contribution size significantly reduced:**

Average contribution to Voter-Owned Election candidates is \$14. Average contribution to post-reform nonparticipating candidates who self-limit size of donations is \$218. Average contribution to pre-reform candidates from 1992 through 2004 was \$365.

**\*Addressing “double giving” seen in pre-Voter-Owned Elections contests:**

This contribution pattern of donors giving to both candidates in the race ensures access to City Hall no matter who wins. Double giving illustrates the broken nature of the private money fundraising system that is now replaced by Voter-Owned Elections.

**\*Ensuring strict qualifying requirements & providing opportunities for incumbent improvement:**

Only 31 percent of those filing a declaration of intent were certified as Voter-Owned Elections candidates. Incumbents who run as participating candidates, or self-limit fundraising due to the reform program, work harder than they would under private fundraising system.

**\*Ending war chest fundraising:**

Voter-Owned Elections incumbents raise no money while in office and concerns about use of campaign funds for non-campaign purposes and contributions to other campaigns are eliminated.



P.O. Box 2723  
 Portland, OR 97208-2723  
 503/283-1922  
 503/283-1877 (fax)  
[www.commoncause.org/oregon](http://www.commoncause.org/oregon)

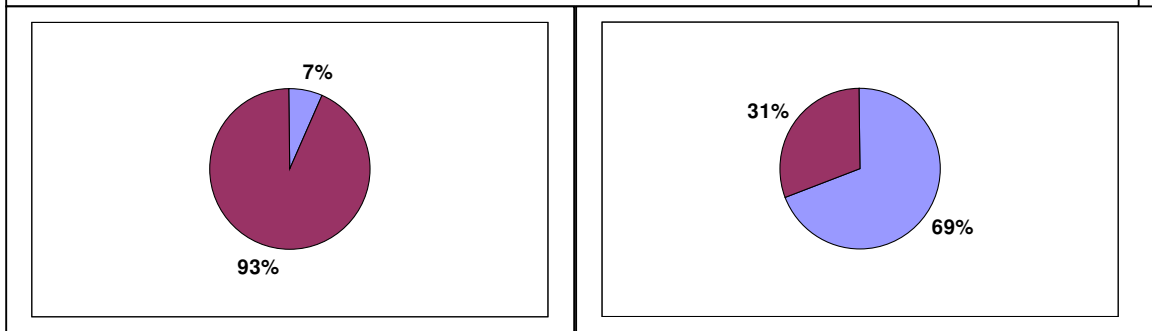
## Voter-Owned Elections: Improving Portland Politics – 2006-2010

### History of Money in Portland Politics

The Portland City Council adopted Voter-Owned Elections in May 2005. Evaluating the success of this campaign finance reform program requires a review of pre-reform contribution trends in Portland election campaigns, keeping in mind that previously the only option available for candidates was private money fundraising. Key facts include:

- Since 1970 Portland mayoral and city commissioner incumbents have spent over four times the combined amount of all their challengers.
- Spending on commissioner and mayoral races has increased substantially since 1970.
- From 1992 through 2003, 66 percent of dollars contributed to the initial and subsequent campaigns of City Council members came from donors with business affiliations, particularly those with financial and real estate interests. This trend continued in 2004 with 68 percent of contributions to all candidates in 2004 city races coming from business donors. Most of these donors, however, were not small businesses.
- Portland campaign contributions have been dominated by money from downtown and other zip codes west of the Willamette River. Contributions from only ten of Portland’s 51 zip codes comprised 56.4 percent of total fundraising from 1992 through 2004 elections. Only two of those were from east of the Willamette.
- From 1992 through 2004, the average campaign contribution was \$365.
- Most fundraising, however, comes from major donors. In 2004, 69 percent of the money city candidates raised came from only 602 donors writing checks of \$1,000 or more. These major donors gave \$2.1 million even though they represent just 7 percent of total donors.

**Only 7 percent of the donors, writing checks of \$1,000 or more, made up 69 percent of total 2004 fundraising by city candidates**



- Some of those checks larger than \$1,000 were for \$5,000 and up. In 2004, only 83 individuals and groups made contributions of \$5,000 or more to a Portland city candidate.

These contributions totaled \$1,056,500 and represented 35 percent of total fundraising that election cycle though these 83 major donors were only 0.8 percent of contributors.

- The average size of these contributions was \$12,430.
- Self-financing has played a role in city campaigns with financial support from several candidates to their own campaigns ranging from \$5,005 to \$75,100.
- Excluding self-financing, the five largest contributions to a city candidate ranged from \$17,400 to \$35,345.
- Reform opponents failed to collect enough valid signatures in their attempt to place an initiative to repeal Voter-Owned Elections on the May 2006 ballot.
  - The Portland Business Alliance and others who contributed to this failed repeal initiative attempt gave \$595,578 to city candidates in 2004 either directly or through affiliated businesses. These contributions came from 100 entities and represented 20 percent of total political fundraising in the 2004 election season.

## **Two Categories of Portland Elections**

Analysis of the success of Voter-Owned Elections requires an understanding that election campaigns for Portland city offices have typically fallen into two categories:

- **Open seat contests:** Open seat races are infrequent, but occur when a member of the City Council retires or runs for another office. Usually open seat contests involve just two viable candidates as determined by fundraising capacity. Indeed, a better description of the occasional open seat race in Portland's past is that they were fundraising battles.
- **Incumbent contests:** Typically, City Council incumbents run again. Challengers in the past usually had little or no resources to run a viable campaign and donors to incumbents in those noncompetitive races tended to be political insiders and past donors.

Because of Voter-Owned Elections contests in each of these categories of city elections are improving. In open seat races overall campaign spending has been reduced. Voters benefit from more candidates discussing city issues in more grassroots campaigns. Special interest influence is most effectively reduced when participating candidates win without private money contributions. However, the potential for special interest influence is also reduced when candidates agree to cap their campaign spending and limit the size of the contributions they accept even if they don't participate in the reform program.

## **Facilitating Financial Fair Fights in Incumbent Races**

### **Before Voter-Owned Elections**

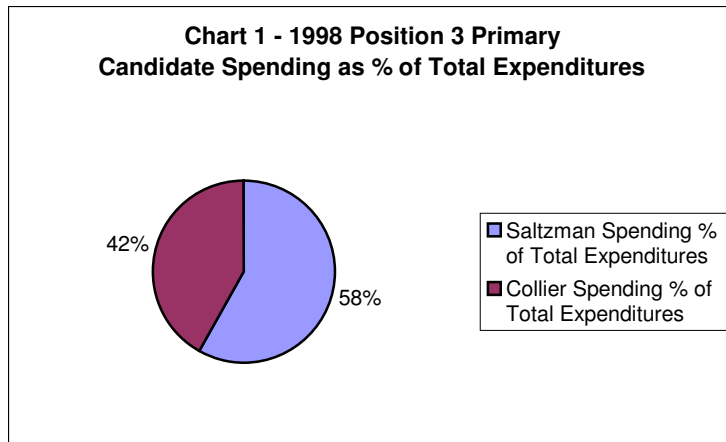
As documented by the City Auditor office, between 1970 and 2004, candidates for open council seats in Portland spent over \$1 million. In contrast, total spending in contests involving incumbents was usually less than \$200,000. Raising more campaign cash is typically the best indicator of electoral success. For example, in Portland elections between 1970 and 2004, the top-spending candidate won 87 percent of the time with incumbents typically having far more resources.

The pattern of major campaign spending by two main candidates in an open seat race followed by a race where the incumbent faces nominal opponents is seen in the difference between the 1998 and 2002 Portland City Council Position #3 contests.

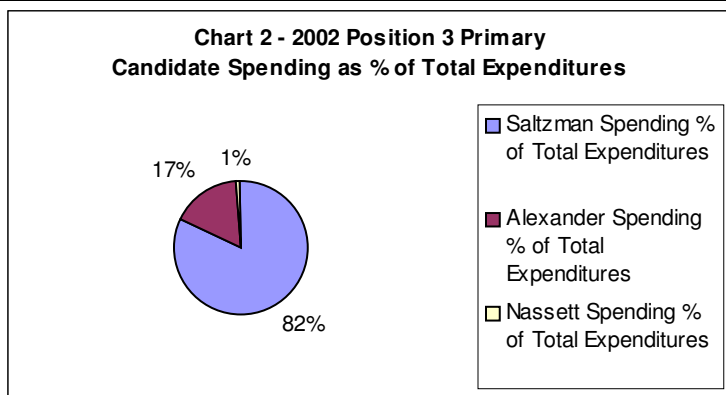
In 1998 there was an open seat Position #3 race between Dan Saltzman and Tanya Collier. They were the major candidates deemed viable because they were the top fundraisers. Their total combined spending during the primary was \$454,441. Table 1 and Chart 1 show the division of total expenditures between Saltzman (58%) and Collier (42%) indicating a fairly even financial match in a race won by now-Commissioner Saltzman in November of that year.

**Table 1 – City Council Position 3 – Percentage of Total Spending by Candidates**

| 1998 primary – open seat                           |     |                     | 2002 primary - incumbent    |     |                     | 2006 primary - incumbent    |     |                     | 2010 primary - incumbent    |     |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| Saltzman                                           | 58% | % of total spending | <b>Saltzman</b>             | 82% | % of total spending | <b>Saltzman</b>             | 53% | % of total spending | <b>Saltzman</b>             | 49% | % of total spending |
| Collier                                            | 42% |                     | Alexander                   | 17% |                     | Fritz                       | 47% |                     | Cornett                     | 46% |                     |
|                                                    |     |                     | Nassett                     | 1%  |                     |                             |     |                     | Volm                        | 5%  |                     |
| Saltzman won the general election against Collier. |     |                     | Saltzman won in the primary |     |                     | Saltzman won in the primary |     |                     | Saltzman won in the primary |     |                     |



In the 2002 primary, Dan Saltzman, now the incumbent, faced nominal opposition in a primary with overall spending of \$105,724. Saltzman’s spending represented 82% of total expenditures as shown in the chart below. This lopsided spending is due to minimal fundraising capacity by opponents against an incumbent prior to Voter-Owned Elections. (See Table 1 and Chart 2.)



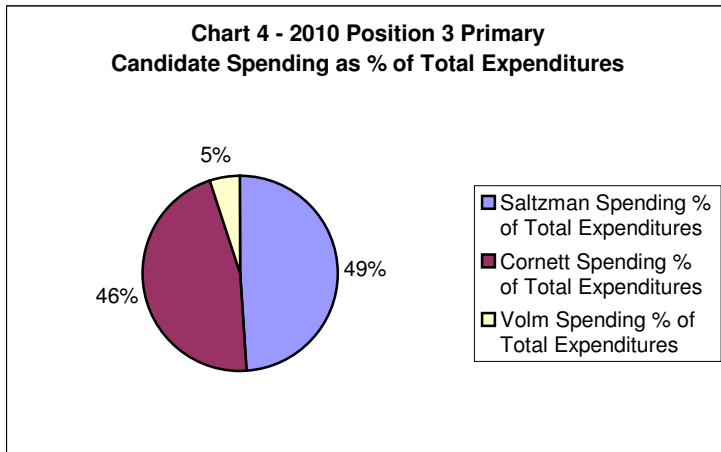
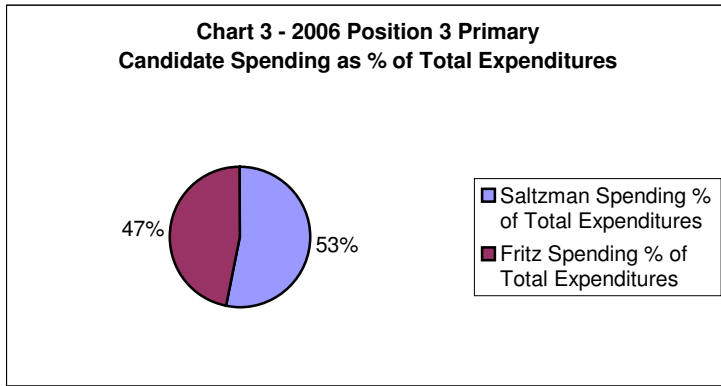
This has been the typical pattern in Portland’s races involving incumbents and results in campaigns with minimal discussion of city issues or an incumbent’s record.

**After Voter-Owned Elections**

Due to Voter-Owned Elections, Commissioner Saltzman self-limited his overall spending and capped his contributions to \$500 in both his 2006 and 2010 primaries.

The split in total spending between candidates was far more even in 2006 and 2010 compared to the lopsided expenditure pattern seen in Saltzman’s 2002 primary when he ran as an incumbent before the reform program was available. (See Table 1 and Charts 3 and 4.)

An incumbent may win using when facing a challenger using the reform option, but it is a financial fair fight as campaign finance reform only addresses the financial advantage of incumbency. Voters benefit because a more competitive campaigns results in more discussion of city issues and increases the accountability of elected officials.

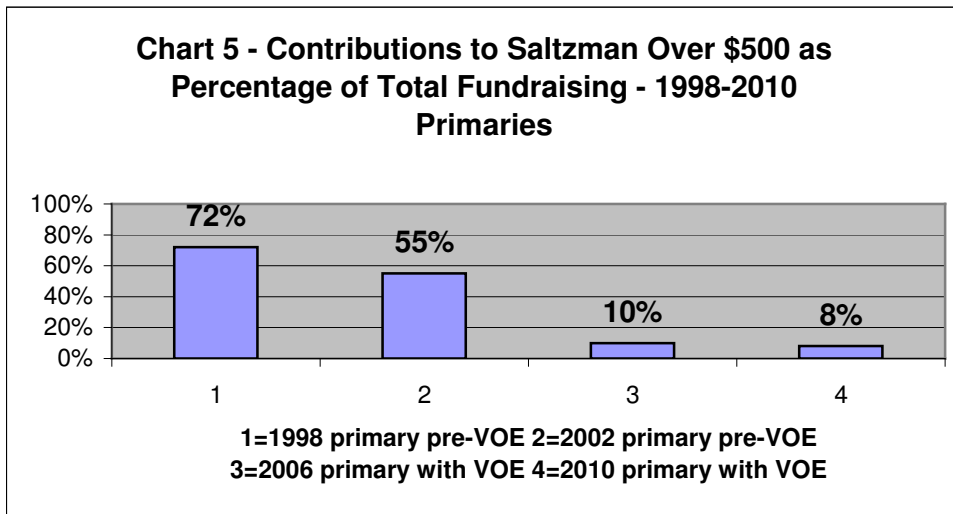


### **Reducing Special Interest Influence in Incumbent Races**

During Portland’s last pre-reform election in 2004, almost seven out of every ten dollars given to city candidates (69 percent) came in checks of \$1,000 or more. There were only 602 of these donors and they represented just 7 percent of contributors. Some of these checks were for \$5,000 and up. Just 83 donors, primarily businesses or groups, made contributions of \$5,000 or more and the money from this tiny group comprised 35 percent of total fundraising of the 2004 election cycle.

Due to Voter-Owned Elections, these large contributions of \$1,000 or \$5,000 or more are largely a thing of the past. Even non-participating candidates are typically limiting the size of their contributions to less than \$500.

The potential for major donors to exert their influence when contributions are capped to \$500 (a trend only seen since the beginning of the reform program) is significantly reduced compared to pre-Voter-Owned Elections campaigns. For example, during Saltzman’s open seat race in 1998 he received 12 contributions of \$5,000 or more, including two donations of almost \$25,000 and one of \$50,000. By contrast, in 2006 and 2010, Saltzman limited his overall spending and capped the size of cash contributions at \$500. In both those campaigns, there were a few donations to Saltzman larger than \$500, including in-kind contributions and a \$2,500 contribution from his mother. Overall, however, the size of contributions were far less in 2006 and 2010 compared to the contributions to Saltzman during his previous campaigns.



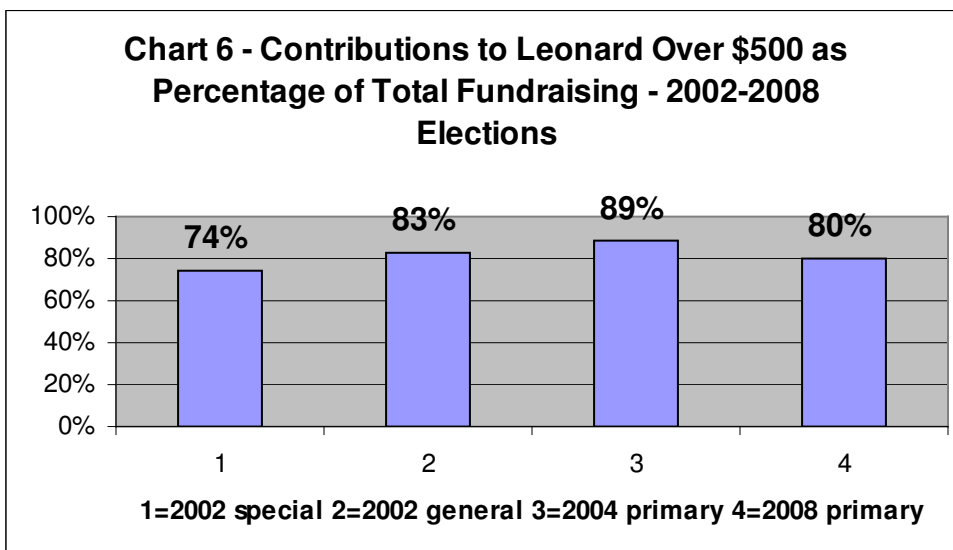
This is illustrated in Chart 5 that shows contributions over \$500 to the primary campaigns of Dan Saltzman as a percentage of his total contributions in 1998, 2002, 2006, and 2010.

Due to Voter-Owned Elections, Saltzman’s 2006 and 2010 fundraising in contributions greater than \$500 represented

only 10 and 8 percent of his total fundraising respectively. This is in contrast to Saltzman’s pre-reform program primaries in 1998 and 2002 where Saltzman’s fundraising was dominated by contributions far larger than \$500. As a percentage of total fundraising, donations greater than \$500 comprised 72 and 55 percent, respectively, of Saltzman’s fundraising in his 1998 and 2002 primary contests.

Smaller contributions were not as prevalent in incumbent Nick Fish’s 2010 re-election to City Council Position #2 because he did not face a Voter-Owned Elections challenger. Commissioner Fish’s fundraising after his initial election and 2010 primary included \$37,900 in contributions greater than \$500 with these donations representing 42 percent of his total fundraising. The difference between these two races involving incumbents is due to Saltzman facing a reform program participant as well as several candidates who tried to qualify for the reform program. This resulted in more vigorous campaign discussions compared to the Position #2 race with Commissioner Fish. In Nick Fish’s race, no Voter-Owned Elections opponent meant less debate and dialogue with a far greater victory margin (80%) compared to Saltzman (55%).

The domination of fundraising by contributions larger than \$500 when an incumbent does not opt in or voluntarily limit the size of contributions in response to the reform program is seen in Chart 6 pertaining to the campaigns of Commissioner Randy Leonard.



In Leonard’s first contest, the 2002 special election that served as the primary to replace Charles Hales, contributions larger than \$500 represented 74 percent of total fundraising. This percentage increased to 83 percent during Leonard’s general election in 2002 when he won Position #4 on the City Council.

The domination of Leonard's fundraising by contributions over \$500 increased to 89 percent of his total fundraising during his 2004 primary. In Leonard's 2008 primary he did not face a reform program opponent and did not voluntarily cap the size of contributions. This is reflected in the finding that 80 percent of his total fundraising came in contributions larger than \$500.

### **Incumbent Improvement, Not Incumbent Protection**

The goal of Voter-Owned Elections is not to unseat incumbents. Instead campaign finance reform addresses the financial advantage of incumbency and reduces the potential for special interest influence when incumbents either use the reform program or voluntarily reduce the size of their contributions. Characterizing reform as incumbent protection is quite inaccurate compared to how rarely challengers are successful under the private money fundraising system in place before Voter-Owned Elections. As reported in *Willamette Week* in January 2004, City Hall incumbents had lost only five times in 121 contests since 1970.

## **Reducing Campaign Spending in Open Seat Contests**

### **Before Voter-Owned Elections**

As documented by the City Auditor office, spending on commissioner and mayoral races has increased substantially since 1970. Candidates running for an open Council seat in 1970 spent \$560,000 while expenditures of \$735,000 were made by candidates in a 1992 open seat contest. Spending in an open mayoral contest in 1972 was \$680,000 with about the same amount of expenditures in 1984, but spending jumped to \$1.3 million in 1992. (Figures adjusted for inflation).

In 2004, total spending in the open mayoral contest came to \$1.6 million. Spending by the two main candidates, Tom Potter and Jim Francesconi, during the 2004 mayoral primary was \$1,060,400. Tom Potter won in 2004, an atypical result for a financial underdog who self-limited his campaign contributions. The *Oregonian* editorial board opposes Voter-Owned Elections and often cites former Mayor Tom Potter's success running under self-imposed contribution limits as a reason reform isn't needed. But during the May 18, 2005 Council hearing on Voter-Owned Elections, Mayor Potter said, "I really support this. I was an anomaly [in my mayoral race]. I don't think [how I ran] is possible for others." Potter was referring to his name recognition due to 30 years of public service including serving as Portland's Chief of Police.

In 2004, total primary and general election spending in the open seat contest for City Council Position #1 between Sam Adams and Nick Fish came to \$1,320,809. Sam Adams won that contest.

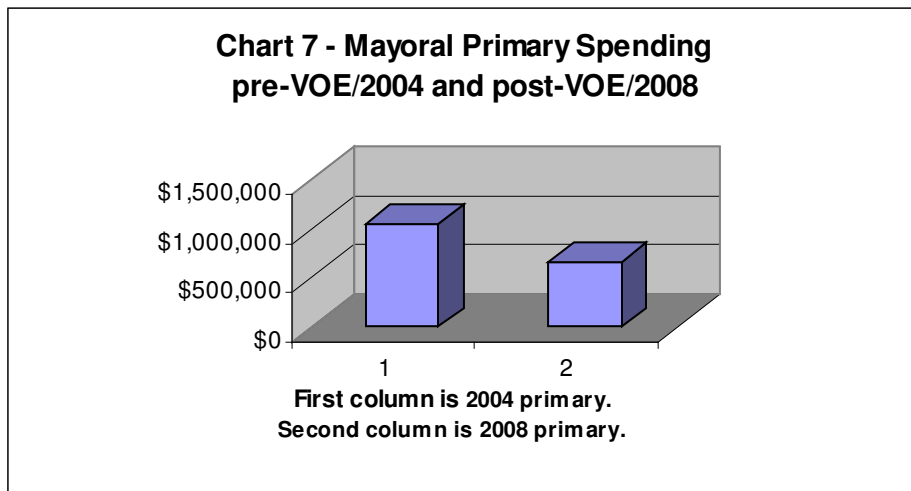
### **After Voter-Owned Elections**

Due to Voter-Owned Elections, the 2008 open seat races for mayor and City Council Position #1 looked very different compared to 2004 in terms of campaign spending.

Spending by mayoral candidates Sam Adams and Sho Dozono during the 2008 primary totaled \$672,464 compared with \$1,060,400 spent in the 2004 mayoral primary. Wanting to run in the spirit of Voter-Owned Elections, both Adams and Dozono self-imposed expenditures limits with the result that spending was reduced by 37 percent from 2004 mayoral primary spending. The

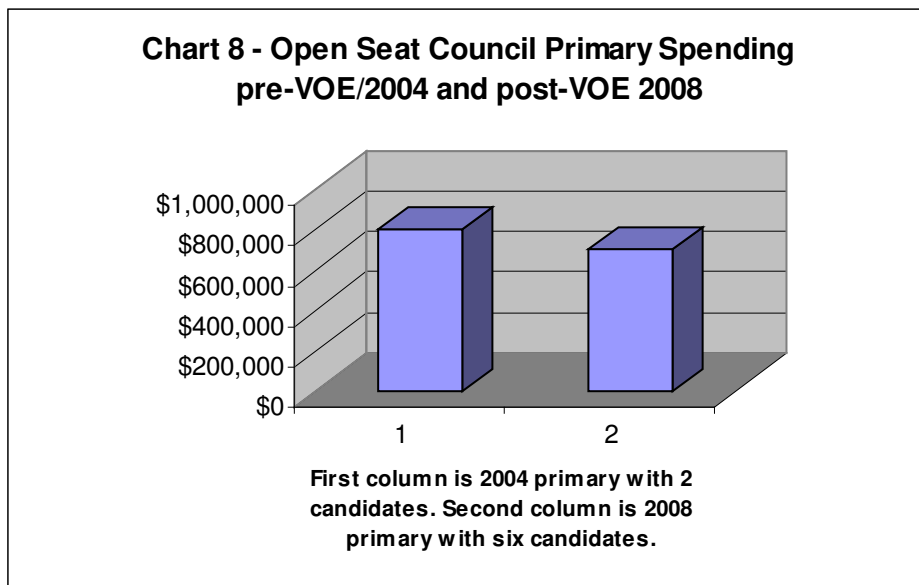
contrast between mayoral primary spending before and after Voter-Owned Elections in 2004 and 2008 is shown in Chart 7.

The 2008 race for City Council Position #1 was an open seat contest because then-Commissioner Sam Adams ran for mayor. Instead of a high spending contest between two challengers, voters benefited by the discussion of city issues provided by six candidates in the primary, including five who ran using the Voter-Owned Elections option. Just two candidates during the 2004 primary spent \$801,372 while during the 2008 primary, spending was reduced to 88 percent of that level, or \$704,311, with \$117,385 average spending by the six candidates.

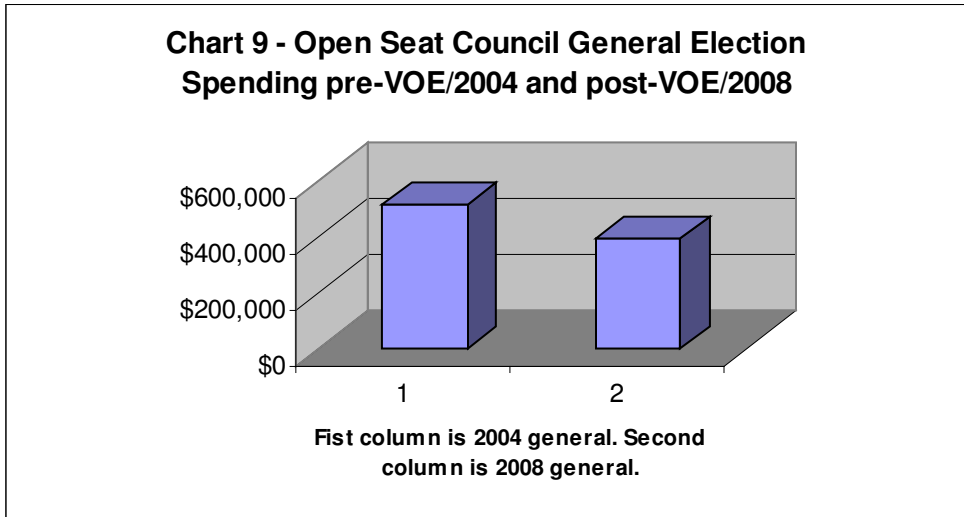


In other words spending was reduced by 12 percent in a race with six candidates compared to the 2004 primary with just two candidates. (See Chart 8.)

As shown in Chart 9, spending in the 2008 general election between two reform program candidates, Amanda Fritz and Charles Lewis, came to \$397,642. This was only 77 percent of the \$519,437 spent by Sam Adams and Nick Fish in their November 2004 contest. In other words, spending was reduced by 23 percent in the 2008 general election compared to the comparable open seat contest in November of 2004.







### Reducing Special Interest Influence in Open Seat Contests

Due to Voter-Owned Elections, the 2008 open seat races for mayor and City Council Position #1 also looked different compared to 2004 in terms of reducing even the perception of special interest influence.

For example, Voter-Owned Elections addresses “double giving” when contributors give to both candidates in the race. The double giving contribution pattern seems designed to ensure access no matter who wins and illustrates the broken nature of the private money fundraising system that is now replaced by the reform program in Portland. Table 2 illustrates several double giving patterns in the 2004 open seat City Council Position #1 contest between Sam Adams and Nick Fish.

**Table 2: Double Giving in 2004 Commissioner Position #1 Portland City Council Race**

| Double Giving Patterns                                                             | Primary         |             |                 |              | General         |             |                 |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|
|                                                                                    | Adams           |             | Fish            |              | Adams           |             | Fish            |              |
|                                                                                    | \$              | %           | \$              | %            | \$              | %           | \$              | %            |
| Hedge Bets All the Way - primary and general double giving                         | \$18,200        | 4.1%        | \$11,200        | 3.4%         | \$8,450         | 3.3%        | \$15,000        | 5.6%         |
| Bide Your Time & Then Hedge Bets - general double giving only                      |                 |             |                 |              | \$4,250         | 1.7%        | \$7,249         | 2.7%         |
| I like them both and/or keep them both happy early on - primary double giving only | \$8,450         | 1.9%        | \$10,450        | 3.2%         |                 |             |                 |              |
| Hedged Bets Early - double giving in primary then gave only to Fish                | \$9,050         | 2.1%        | \$12,950        | 3.9%         |                 |             |                 |              |
| Hedged Bets Early - double giving in primary then gave only to Adams               | \$1,900         | 0.4%        | \$1,800         | 0.5%         |                 |             |                 |              |
| Only Gave to Adams in Primary then Double Giving in General                        |                 |             |                 |              | \$4,750         | 1.9%        | \$7,150         | 2.7%         |
| Only Gave to Fish in Primary then Double Giving in General                         |                 |             |                 |              | \$5,000         | 2.0%        | \$5,000         | 1.9%         |
| <b>Double-Giving Total</b>                                                         | <b>\$37,600</b> | <b>8.6%</b> | <b>\$36,400</b> | <b>11.0%</b> | <b>\$22,450</b> | <b>8.9%</b> | <b>\$34,399</b> | <b>12.8%</b> |

For example, some double giving donors hedged their bets and gave to both Adams and Fish during the primary and general election while others sat out the primary and gave to both candidates during the general election.

Dollars from double givers comprised 8.6 percent of Adams' and 11 percent of Fish's primary fundraising. General election double giving to Adams was essentially the same at 8.9 percent. Double giving as a percentage of Fish's general election fundraising increased to 12.8 percent.

Comcast Cable and RB Pamplin Corp. were the largest double givers. Comcast gave \$7,500 to Adams (\$5,000 in the primary and \$2,500 in the general election) and \$9,000 to Fish (split \$3,000 and \$6,000 between the primary and general elections.) RB Pamplin Corp. gave Adams \$8,000 (split \$7,000 and \$1,000 between the primary and general elections) and \$5,000 to Fish (\$2,000 in the primary and \$3,000 in the general). Gerding Edlen Development gave \$5,000 to Fish in the primary and then gave \$5,000 each to both Fish and Adams in the general election, ensuring access no matter who won. The largest portion of double giving dollars came from donors who gave contributions to Adams and Fish in both the primary and general elections. These donors were hedging their bets from start to finish.

Due to Voter-Owned Elections, Portland candidates are no longer receiving the large contributions like those described above from either double givers or donors who concentrate their contributions on one candidate. For example, the potential for special interest influence was reduced during the 2008 mayoral primary even without a candidate using the reform program because both Sho Dozono and Sam Adams put a cap of \$500 on the size of cash contributions they would accept.

Special interest influence is even more dramatically reduced when candidates win using the Voter-Owned Elections reform option because their fundraising is limited to small donor fundraising only during the qualifying period. For example, in 2008 now-Commissioner Amanda Fritz won using the reform program and became only the seventh woman to serve on the City Council in its 160-year history.

### **Average Campaign Contribution Dramatically Reduced**

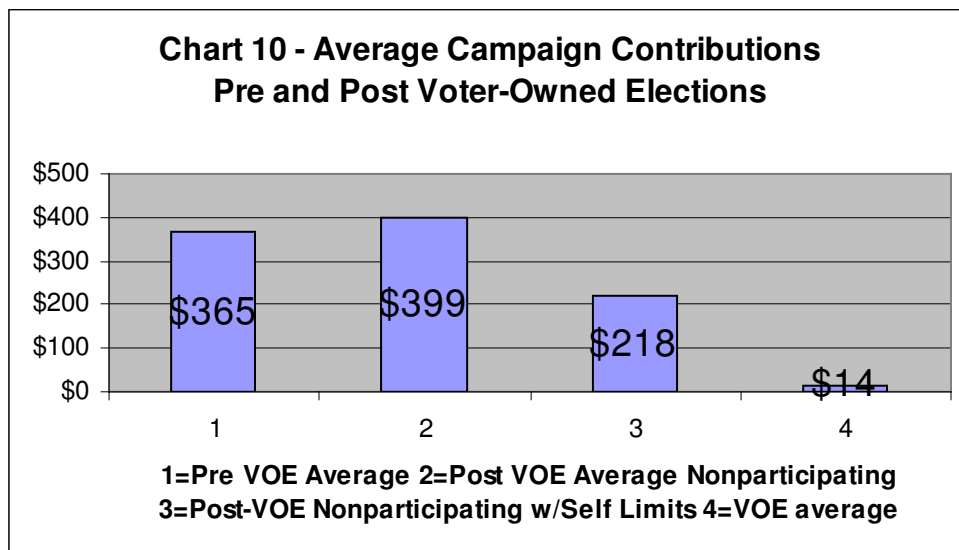
From 1992 through 2004, the average campaign contribution to Portland candidates was \$365. (This is an estimate since it includes an assumption that each contribution of \$50 or less for which identification of the donor is not required is \$25. The 2004 data includes all candidates, while data from 1992 through 2003 is for city council winners and incumbents.)

The average private money contribution made to Voter-Owned Elections candidates between 2006 and 2010 is only \$14. Most of the private fundraising by participating candidates comes in the \$5 qualifying contributions. The average contribution figure is \$14 due to the option of raising seed money and in-kind contributions. (See chart 10.)

Seed money contributions of up to \$100 are allowed up to a limit of \$15,000 during the qualifying period. The value of qualifying and seed money contributions are deducted from the public funding allocation. In-kind contributions up to 6 percent of the public funding allocation are allowed. This provision protects candidates from being penalized from in-kind contributions that are given without prior knowledge of the candidate and reflects the political reality that some organizations and businesses participate by making in-kind contributions.

The average campaign contribution to nonparticipating candidates but self-imposed limits on overall spending and size of donations between 2006 and 2010 is \$218.

The average campaign contribution to nonparticipating candidates who did not impose any limits on spending and size of donations between 2006 and 2010 is \$399.



(The average contribution sizes for nonparticipating candidates are estimates since they include an assumption that each contribution of \$100 or less for which identification of the donor is not required is \$50. This reflects that beginning in 2006 the threshold for reporting unitemized contributions was increased from \$50 to \$100.)

### Strict Qualifying Threshold

Participating candidates must collect a large number (1,000 for council and auditor candidates/1,500 for mayoral candidates) of \$5 qualifying contributions from registered Portland voters. These strict thresholds have meant that over two-thirds (69 percent) of those who have filed a declaration of intent to gather qualifying contributions did not or should not have received certification. Between 2006 and 2010, 29 individuals have filed declarations of intent. Fourteen of them applied for certification. Two did not meet the threshold while another two should not have been certified due to violations of program rules, Emilee Boyles and Sho Dozono. Nine out of 29 or only 31 percent of those who filed a declaration of intent were validly certified to receive public funding.

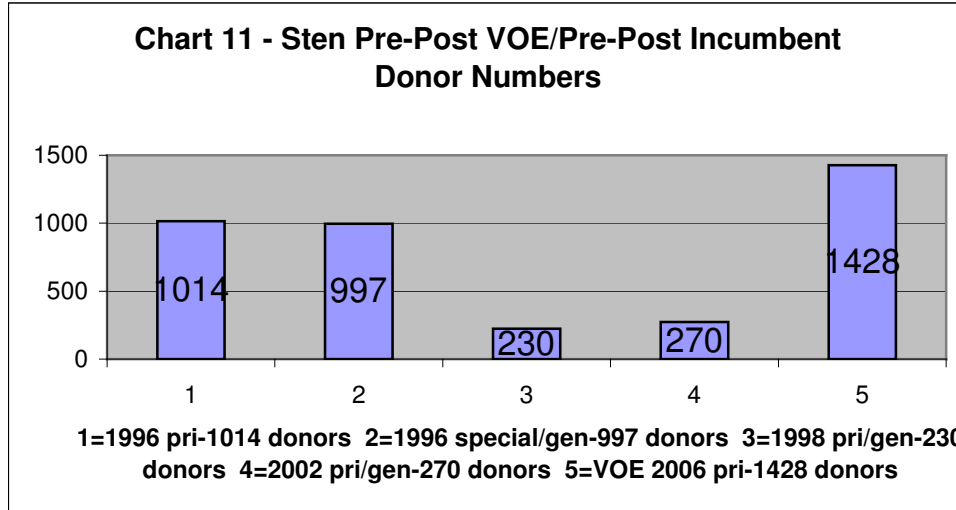
### Participating Incumbents Work Harder

Incumbents running as Voter-Owned Elections candidates or under self-imposed contributions limits due to the reform program, contact more people than they would likely need to if they relied on established rolodexes and did typical pre-reform private money fundraising. (All donor numbers prior to Voter-Owned Elections or to nonparticipating are estimates because the exact number of unitemized donors can't be determined.)

Erik Sten in his first electoral attempt, for example, contacted an estimated 1014 donors. Sten lost that 1996 primary. Later in 1996, Sten ran for a vacant seat and in his special election and general election contest had an estimated 997 donors. (See chart 11.)

As an incumbent, however, Sten’s donor base in his 1998 and 2002 re-election contests are estimated to be 230 and 270 individuals or groups.

As a Voter-Owned Elections candidate in 2006, Sten had to obtain support from 1428 donors.

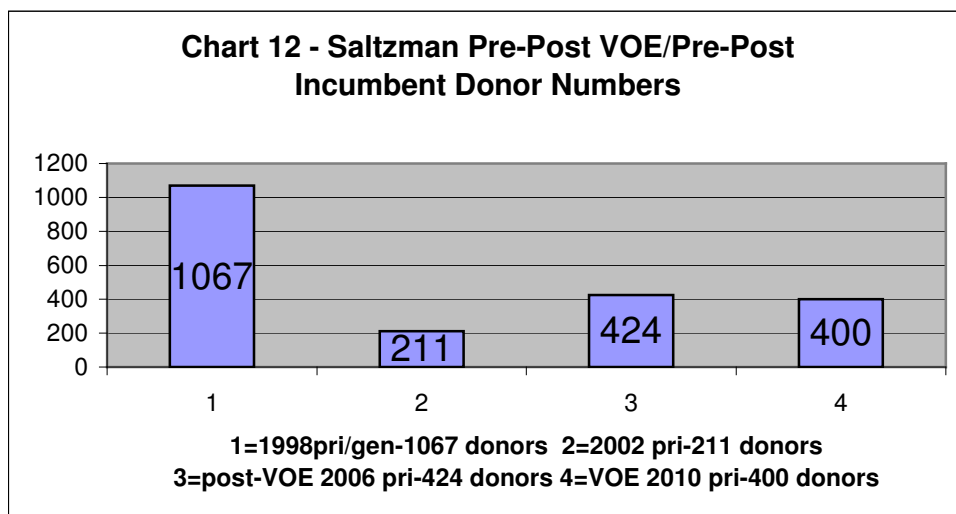


Erik Sten said, “Fundraising got much easier after my initial campaigns. I was a long shot early in 1996 and my fundraising included more of those valuable but hard-won \$50 contributions. Once in office the money comes easier and in bigger checks.”

In his first race in 1998, Dan Saltzman contacted an estimated 1067 donors.

As an incumbent, however, Saltzman’s donor base in his 2002 re-election contest is an estimated 211 individuals or groups.

After enactment of Voter-Owned Elections, Dan Saltzman ran under self-imposed spending and contribution size limits. He needed to contact more donors than during his 2002 re-election race but fewer than the numbers he needed to contact in 1998 or the qualifying threshold of \$5 qualifying contributions. In 2006 and 2010, Saltzman’s estimated donor base was 424 and 400 individuals or groups, respectively. (See chart 12.)



## **Ending War Chest Fundraising**

Another troubling political trend addressed by Voter-Owned Elections is fundraising between campaigns. For example, the committee of Vera Katz received \$52,471 from a donor in 1993 after her 1992 mayoral victory. The next largest post-election contribution was \$17,363 given by the political committee of Sam Adams to Nick Fish's PAC as reported in 2005. Adams had beaten Fish in the 2004 election. The contribution from Adams to his former opponent helped retire Fish's campaign debt and presumably reduced the likelihood that Fish would run against Adams in the future.

One feature of Voter-Owned Elections is that any unspent campaign funds are returned to city coffers. This means that a City Council member elected using the reform program, such as Commissioner Amanda Fritz, has no war chest after her election.

Incumbents have historically built up war chests with fundraising between their elections, frequently with contributions by political insiders, and this is one means by which they fend off challengers. Ongoing fundraising also allows incumbents to use campaign funds for non-campaign purposes between elections such as pass throughs to other campaigns. Passthroughs are explicitly banned during the campaigns of participating candidates and this practice cannot continue after an official wins using Voter-Owned Elections because he or she has no leftover campaign funds.

Voter-Owned Elections candidates also do no post-election fundraising. This addresses the perception problem that faces nonparticipating candidates who choose to accept contributions between elections, especially since that can mean receiving donations from groups or businesses with business before the City Council.