

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign: GOP collects 3x more than Dems in corporate contributions

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The state GOP and two Republican legislative campaign committees (LCCs) accepted more than three times the corporate contributions that their Democratic counterparts received in the first half of 2022. And the total amount of corporate contributions was more than twice the amount during the comparable six-month period in 2020.

The state Republican Party, Republican Assembly Campaign Committee, and the Committee to Elect a Republican Senate accepted \$633,393 from corporations during the first six months of this year, campaign finance reports showed.

The state Democratic Party, Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee, and the State Senate Democratic Committee accepted \$188,500 in corporate contributions through June 30.

Here's how much each party and committee accepted:

Republican Assembly Campaign Committee, \$340,154

Committee to Elect a Republican Senate, \$267,239

Democratic Party of Wisconsin, \$109,500

Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee, \$41,000

State Senate Democratic Committee, \$38,000

Republican Party of Wisconsin, \$26,000

Corporate contributions came from businesses, unions, and trade associations representing health care, agriculture, construction, insurance, business, banking, manufacturing, tourism, energy, and real estate interests, among others.

The top corporate contributors to the state parties and LCCs between January and June of 2022 were:

WEC Energy Group, of Milwaukee, \$36,000, including \$12,000 each to the Republican Assembly Campaign Committee, Committee to Elect a Republican Senate, and the Democratic Party;

American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), of Washington, D.C., \$36,000, including \$12,000 each to the Democratic Party, Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee, and the State Senate Democratic Committee;

Wisconsin Association of Health Plans, of Madison, \$33,500, including \$12,000 each to the Republican Assembly Campaign Committee and the Committee to Elect a Republican Senate, \$5,000 to the Democratic Party, \$2,500 to the Republican Party, and \$1,000 each to the Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee and the State Senate Democratic Committee;

Forest County Potawatomi Community, of Crandon, \$30,000, including \$12,000 to the Democratic Party, \$6,000 each to the Republican Assembly Campaign Committee and the Committee to Elect a Republican Senate, and \$3,000 each to the Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee and the State Senate Democratic Committee;

Wisconsin Beer Distributors Association, of Madison, \$28,000, including \$12,000 each to the Republican Assembly Campaign Committee and the Committee to Elect a Republican Senate, and \$4,000 to the Assembly Democratic Campaign Committee.

State campaign finance laws approved in late 2015 by the GOP-controlled legislature and former Republican Gov. Scott Walker allow corporate contributions

of up to \$12,000 a year to each party and legislative campaign committee if they create a segregated fund for the money.

For more than 100 years prior to this, such corporate contributions were illegal. The 2015 law prohibits corporate contributions from being used by those groups for direct contributions to candidates or for express advocacy electioneering activities in political campaigns, but the money can be used for salaries of those who say which candidates should be supported.

The \$821,893 in corporate contributions to the parties and LCCs in the first half of 2022 more than doubled the \$403,635 in corporate contributions to the two state parties and four LCCs in the first six months of 2020 election year.