

# Campaigns in Maryland

## An Analysis of Fundraising by Winning State Legislators

December 2019



## Acknowledgements

Founded in 1974, Common Cause Maryland is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to restoring the core values of American democracy, reinventing an open, honest and accountable government that works in the public interest, and empowering ordinary people to make their voices heard.

We engage in strategic advocacy, research, and outreach to ensure that citizens' voices are heard. Our goals are to promote government reforms at the state and local levels, hold public officials accountable for their actions, and document cases in which special interests are unduly influencing the policy debate.

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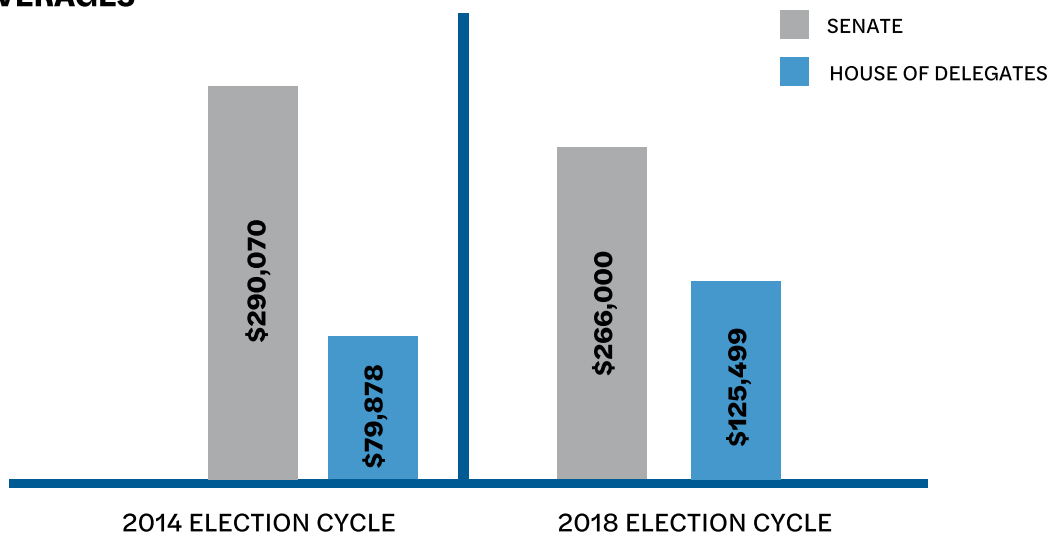
# OVERVIEW

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In 2017, Common Cause Maryland produced an analysis of legislative candidates fundraising during the 2014 election cycle. Similarly, this report is an analysis of candidates fundraising during the 2018 election cycle. The data in this report simply shows how fundraising expectations for candidates continue to rise across the state. From the years 2015-2018, Senators, on average, received a contribution total of \$266,000.00. This amount of contributions was a slight decrease from the 2014 election cycle, but it is still a significant amount of money raised for state senate seats on average. Delegates received an average contribution total of \$125,499.00, which is a 64% increase from the 2014 election where the average amount fundraised was \$79,878.00.[1] This table shows the rise in average from the 2014 election cycle to the 2018 election cycle.

Geographical location still seems to be an indicator of whether campaign costs will be high. Specifically, the Central Maryland Region (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard) and Prince George’s County seem to have the priciest campaigns. But of course, fundraising efforts were impacted by competitiveness, a candidate’s leadership position, and candidates fundraising efforts. Since the 2014 election cycle, the number of individual candidates fundraising in large amounts has increased. These tables show how many more winning individual candidates are spending several hundred thousand dollars on their races.[2]

## OVERALL AVERAGES



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[1] See Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Susan Radov, Campaigns in Maryland: An Analysis of Fundraising by Winning State Legislatures, 2011-2014, Common Cause Maryland, July 31, 2017, available at <https://www.commoncause.org/maryland/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2018/03/campaigns-in-maryland-what.pdf>

[2] Id.

## Senate

Cost	2014 Election Cycle	2018 Election Cycle
Over \$250,000	15 Candidates	19 Candidates
Over \$300,000	11 Candidates	16 Candidates
Over \$400,000	7 Candidates	8 Candidates

## House of Delegates

Cost	2014 Election Cycle	2018 Election Cycle
Over \$150,000	28 Candidates	37 Candidates
Over \$200,000	14 Candidates	16 Candidates
Over \$300,000	2 Candidates	7 Candidates

## METHODOLOGY

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The data was gathered by using the state's campaign finance database to gather the total contributions to the campaign account of each winning legislative candidate in the 2018 elections. The data range included 1/1/2015-12/31/2018. The contribution totals were averaged by region, by county, and by district.

This research did not include what candidates ultimately spent on their races – or what funds they transferred to other candidates, slates, or campaign accounts. Likewise, this report did not analyze spending by independent groups or PACs, which are a rising factor in state campaigns. This report simply creates a snapshot of what fundraising expectations candidates face when they are running for office.

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

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Similar to the 2014 election cycle, Senate candidates raised more than House candidates. However, the delegates outraised their senate counterparts in Allegany, Washington, and Dorchester Counties.

On the County level, candidates showed great variability in money raised across the state. The lowest county fundraising average for a house seat was \$12,200.00 in Somerset County and the highest was \$234,264.36 in Anne Arundel County. The lowest county fundraising average for a senate seat was \$40,213.62 in Washington County and the highest was \$945,194.44 for Charles County. Note that one of the senate seats for Charles County also represents parts of Prince Georges and Calvert County.

On the Regional level, House candidates raised the most in the Capital Region, average \$93,122.82 and Central Maryland Region, average \$139,957.99. This correlated with expectations based on the cost of living and the cost of advertising in the media markets in those regions of the state. The Southern Maryland, average \$83,221.20, and Eastern Shore, average \$85,469.64, regions fundraised the next highest amounts. The lowest fundraising average was in the Western Maryland region, average \$56,139.36.

For the Senate, the Regional make up was quite different. This is most likely due to Senate races typically being really competitive and leadership fundraising. The highest fundraising average was in the Southern Maryland Region, average \$512,650.62. The Capital Region, average \$256,059.09, Central Maryland Region, average \$252,343.21, and Eastern Shore Region, average \$259,786.06, all had similar high averages. The lowest fundraising average was in Western Maryland Region, average \$53,339.97, similar to the House.

Most of the trends from the 2014 election cycle were present in the 2018 election cycle, including the county and region having a correlation with the amount that candidates were fundraising.[1] Also, there were various candidates self-funding parts of their campaigns in small and large amounts. Overall, a consistent trend is the rise in cost of elections. 21 counties averaged over \$100,000 in fundraising for their senate seats and 11 counties averaged over \$100,000 in fundraising for their house seats. Western Maryland was the only Region where all the counties averaged below \$75,000.00 for both the House and Senate.

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[3] Id.

## **WESTERN MARYLAND**

(Allegany, Garret, Washington)

The highest county average for both Senate and House seats in this region was \$73,304.10 for Washington County (district 1 & 2). The lowest average for house seats in this Region and others was \$33,253.00 for Garret County (district 1). Overall, average fundraising for House seats, \$56,139.36, in this region was higher than the average for Senate seats, \$53,339.97, making this Region an outlier. Typically, Senate seats fundraise more than House seats. Also, noteworthy is that this region only covers two districts and all the counties averaged under \$75,000.00 for all House and Senate seats.

## **CENTRAL MARYLAND**

(Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard)

This region contains Baltimore City (districts 40,41,43,44,45,46) and Baltimore County (districts 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 42, 44), the third largest county in Maryland. Not surprisingly, the average for Baltimore County Senate seats, \$290, 247,51, was the highest average in the region. Except for Carroll County House seats averaging \$62,765.66, all the counties in this region averaged over \$100,000.00 worth of fundraising for their house and senate seats.

## **CAPITAL REGION**

(Frederick, Montgomery, Prince George's)

This region contains Montgomery and Prince George's County, two of the largest counties in Maryland. The highest county average for senate seat in this region was \$409, 775.38 for Prince George's County (Districts 21,22,23,24,25,26,27,47). Prince George County had both the highest averages for Senate and House seats in this region. Except for the House seat in Frederick County, all the counties for both seats averaged over \$100,000.

## **SOUTHERN MARYLAND**

(Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's)

This region has the largest discrepancy in fundraising between Senate and House seats. Senate seats averaged around \$512,650.62 and House seats averaged \$83,221.20. This region also contains the county with the largest average for Senate seats in Maryland, Charles county. Charles County (district 27,28) averaged \$945,194.44. Note that one of the candidates in Charles's County ran for district 27's Senate seat which represents Charles County, Calvert County, and Prince George's County. The candidate raised over \$1,500,000.00 for the seat which elevated the average fundraising amount for Charles's County.

## **EASTERN SHORE**

(Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, Worcester)

In this region, all of the senate seats raised over \$100,000.00. In Talbot County, (District 37) the House seat actually averaged \$100,000.00 more than the Senate at \$228,502.00. However, this region also contained the lowest county average for House seats at \$12,200.00 in Somerset County.

## **TOP INDIVIDUAL FUNDRAISERS**

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### **SENATORS WHO RAISED THE MOST**

1. Thomas Mike Miller, Jr. - \$ 1,666,492.24
2. Douglas J.J. Peters - \$553, 923.45
3. Chris West - \$443,282.80
4. Bobby A. Zirkin - \$439,504.21
5. Guy Guzzone - \$432,295.20

### **DELEGATES WHO RAISED THE MOST**

1. Mike Busch - \$1,821,425.81
2. Nick Mosby - \$559,427.57
3. Maggie McIntosh - \$535,702.62
4. Dereck E. Davis - \$527,712.08
5. Kathy Szeliga - \$400,269.80

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[3] Id.

## RECOMMENDATION

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As a state, Maryland should be concerned about the rise in candidate fundraising totals. When the cost to run for office is high, candidates often need to rely on mega donors or corporate interests to be competitive.[4] Essentially, a few people have major influence on who runs for office and, inevitably, the issues that are being made a priority.[5] There are ways to address this issue. One of them is through Public Financing, which is a campaign system that provides candidates with limited campaign funds if they agree to only accept contributions from small donors. Public Financing can lower the cost of running a campaign. More importantly, Public Financing Programs can reduce the influence of large donors and enable people from different financial backgrounds to run for public office.[6]

Currently three jurisdictions in Maryland have Public Financing Programs: Montgomery County, Howard County, and Prince George's County. Baltimore City voters passed a ballot measure in favor of public financing in 2018 and the reform will be on Baltimore County's ballot in 2020.

According to Maryland PIRG's report on Montgomery County's 2018 elections, campaigns that focused less on fundraising large amounts and more on small donor participation were still able to be successful.[7] Montgomery County's 2018 elections were the first election that gave candidates an option to participate in the public financing program. The result was that candidates who did not utilize the program raised 134% more money than the candidates relying on small donors, without the matching funds.[8] And yet, candidates in the public financing program were still able to run competitive races. The winners of four county council at large seats and two district level council members utilized the Public Financing program. Additionally, people in the program received 96% more contributions than candidates not in the program and 98% of the contributions were made up of small donors, reducing the influence of big money in the political process.[9] As a state we should take advantage of reforms like Public Financing that will decrease the costs of campaigns and put the power back into the hands of the people. By focusing more on how many voters they are reaching and less on how much money said voters are able to give, candidates can feel free to spend more energy on other aspects of their campaign outside of cost.

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[4] Big Money Out: Our Democracy Has a Big Money Problem, Maryland PIRG, available at <https://marylandpirg.org/feature/mdp/big-money-out>

[5] Id.

[6] Emily Scarr, Joe Ready, Fair Elections in Montgomery County: 2018 Matching Program Encourages and Empowers Small Donors, Maryland PIRG, September 2019, available at [https://marylandpirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/Fair%20Elections%20in%20Montgomery%20County-%20Maryland%20PIRG%202019\\_0.pdf](https://marylandpirg.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/Fair%20Elections%20in%20Montgomery%20County-%20Maryland%20PIRG%202019_0.pdf)

[7] Id.

[8] Id.

[9] Id.



# AVERAGE CONTRIBUTION TOTALS

## MARYLAND SENATORS AND DELEGATES, 2015-2018

### Maryland

Body of General Assembly	Average Contribution Total Received
Senate	\$266,934.14
House of Delegates	\$125,499.00

### Western Maryland

Body of General Assembly	Average Contribution Total Received
Senate	\$53,339.97
House of Delegates	\$56,139.36

### Allegany & Garrett Counties (District 1)

Senate	\$59,902.24
House of Delegates	\$61,680.48

### Washington County (District 1,2)

Senate	\$40,213.62
House of Delegates	\$73,304.60

## Capital Region

<b>Body of General Assembly</b>	<b>Average Contribution Total Received</b>
Senate	\$256,059.09
House of Delegates	\$93,122.82

## Frederick County (District 3,4)

Senate	\$271,355.40
House of Delegates	\$52,056.39

## Montgomery County (District 14-20,39)

Senate	\$207,046.48
House of Delegates	\$108,138.16

## Prince George's County (District 21-27,47)

Senate	\$409,775.38
House of Delegates	\$119,173.91

## Central Maryland

<b>Body of General Assembly</b>	<b>Average Contribution Total Received</b>
Senate	\$252,343.21
House of Delegates	\$139,957.99

## Anne Arundel County (District 21,30-33)

Senate	\$243,789.80
House of Delegates	\$234,264.36

## Baltimore County (District 6-8,10-12,42,44)

Senate	\$290,247.51
House of Delegates	\$135,630.77

## Baltimore City (District 40,41,43-46)

Senate	\$247,511.70
House of Delegates	\$189,113.09

## Carroll County (District 4,5,9)

<b>Body of General Assembly</b>	<b>Average Contribution Total Received</b>
Senate	\$262,730.21
House of Delegates	\$62,765.66

## Harford County (District 7,34,35)

Senate	\$195,138.65
House of Delegates	\$108,149.89

## Howard County (District 9,12,13)

Senate	\$274,642.56
House of Delegates	\$109,824.14

## Eastern Shore

<b>Body of General Assembly</b>	<b>Average Contribution Total Received</b>
Senate	\$259,786.06
House of Delegates	\$85,469.64

## Caroline County (District 36,37)

Senate	\$210,976.39
House of Delegates	\$45,228.33

## Cecil County (District 35,36)

Senate	\$149,309.69
House of Delegates	\$44,818.33

## Dorchester & Talbot County (District 37)

Senate	\$123,778.40
House of Delegates	\$171,150.38

## Kent & Queen Anne's County (District 36)

<b>Body of General Assembly</b>	<b>Average Contribution Total Received</b>
Senate	\$298,174.37
House of Delegates	\$45,228.33

## Somerset & Worcester County (District 38)

Senate	\$428,797.50
House of Delegates	\$45,006.00

## Wicomico County (District 37,38)

Senate	\$276,287.95
House of Delegates	\$123,884.75

## Southern Maryland

<b>Body of General Assembly</b>	<b>Average Contribution Total Received</b>
Senate	\$512,650.62
House of Delegates	\$83,221.20

## Calvert County (District 27,29)

Senate	\$451,849.93
House of Delegates	\$99,328.96

## Charles County (District 27,28)

Senate	\$945,194.44
House of Delegates	\$48,622.42

## St. Mary's County (District 29)

Senate	\$140,907.48
House of Delegates	\$101,712.22