

1998 Disclosure Report Card:

Which Ohio candidates properly disclose contributions?

Analysis of employer identifications in 1998 annual campaign finance reports

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Background

Major Findings

In 1995 the Ohio legislature passed campaign finance reform legislation limiting campaign contributions and requiring certain types of financial disclosure. Key to the new public disclosure was a provision requiring that candidates report the employer identification for individual contributors who gave more than \$100. Public disclosure of the employer of a contributor enables the public to examine the economic interests supporting candidates. With this information voters have another tool to evaluate how candidates might be persuaded to vote on key issues.

1. Ohio candidates continue to improve in disclosure.

In 1998, candidates received approximately 47 million dollars in contributions, 19 million from individuals who gave more than \$100. Statewide and legislative candidates identified the employers of 95 percent of individual contributions of more than \$100, up from 92 percent in 1997 and 88 percent in 1996.

Candidates who received an "A" for employer disclosure compliance

2. Most top government officials and candidates for statewide office disclosed 90 percent or more.

Top government officials and candidates running for statewide office set an excellent example of disclosure, most identifying 90 percent or more of the employers of their large contributors. Ohio Secretary of State Kenneth Blackwell set a high standard of excellence, identifying the employers of 99 percent of contributions requiring identifications. Treasurer Joseph Deters is the only top statewide elected official who received a failing grade.

Ohio government leaders' compliance with employer disclosure requirements in 1998		
Government official	Position	Grade
Kenneth Blackwell	Secretary of State	A
JoAnn Davidson	Speaker of the House	A
Ben Espy	Senate Minority Leader	A
Jack Ford	House Minority Leader	A

Betty Montgomery	Attorney General	A
Jim Petro	Auditor	A
Bob Taft	Governor	A
Richard Finan	Senate President	B
Thomas Moyer	Chief Justice	C
Joseph Deters	Treasurer	F

Statewide candidates' record of employer disclosure in 1998		
Office sought	Candidate	Grade
Governor	Lee Fisher (D)	A
	John Mitchel (N)	C
	Bob Taft (R)	A
Secretary of State	Ken Blackwell (R)	A
	Charleta Tavares (D)	B
Attorney General	Richard Cordray (D)	A
	Betty Montgomery (R)	A
Auditor	Jim Petro (R)	A
	Louis Strike (D)	A
Treasurer	Joseph Deters (R)	F

	John Donofrio (D)	F
Chief Justice	Thomas Moyer	C
	Gary Tyack	A
Justice - Jan 2	Paul Pfeifer	A
	Ron Suster	A
Justice - Jan 1	Steven Powell	A
	Francis Sweeney	A

3. Candidates who need to improve

Candidates	Amount to identify	Amount identified	Grade 1998	Grade 1997	Grade 1995-96
John Carey, Jr.	\$ 15,585	\$ 13,635	B	A	A
Richard Finan	\$149,175	\$121,980	B	B	A
Eric Fingerhut	\$ 85,520	\$ 75,870	B	A	--
Ed Jerse	\$ 2,425	\$ 2,050	B	--	A
Gene Krebs	\$ 7,000	\$ 6,100	B	A	A
Jeanine Perry	\$ 9,700	\$ 8,200	B	--	--
Bryan Williams	\$ 3,825	\$ 3,300	B	--	--

Dixie Allen	\$ 4,920	\$ 3,920	C	--	--
Darrell Opfer	\$ 1,586	\$ 1,225	C	A	F
Dick Schafrath	\$ 27,460	\$ 20,960	C	F	A
Jim Trakas	\$ 59,655	\$ 36,800	D	--	--
David Evans	\$ 18,200	\$ 4,200	F	--	--
Sylvester Patton, Jr.	\$ 13,655	\$ 5,510	F	--	--

"--": Did not run for office that year or received no contributions from individuals for more than \$100.
This chart includes legislators who received six or more individual contributions of more than \$100 and failed to identify at least 90% of contributions.

[Candidates in the 1998 general election who identified less than 90%](#)

4. Unknown contributors are known to other candidates

Some candidates failed to identify well-known contributors. An analysis of several large contributions found that some candidates appear to overlook employer identifications other candidates were able to find. Candidates need to make employer identification a priority for staff handling these reports.

Candidates may be under a misunderstanding of the purpose of employer disclosure. Disclosure serves to inform voters about the employer or economic status of contributors. Candidates should be encouraged to disclose information they personally have about contributors.

Examples of unidentified contributors				
Contributor	Amount	Employer	Unidentified in filings by	Identified in the candidate filings of

Michael Boich	\$2500	Boich Companies	Joseph Deters	B. Montgomery
				L. Fisher
David Brennan	\$1,000	Brennan Industries	Randall Gardner	K. Blackwell
	\$1,000		Gary Suhadolnik	B. Montgomery
	\$2,500		Jim Trakas	
Clay Mathile	\$2,000	Iams	Thomas Moyer	B. Montgomery
				J. Jacobson
Thomas Rumpke	\$1,000	Rumpke Waste	Lee Fisher	R. Finan
	\$250		George Terwilleger	B. Taft
	\$1,000		Gary Suhadolnik	
	\$500		Gary Suhadolnik	
Ward Timken	\$1,000	Timken	Thomas Moyer	K. Blackwell
				J. Petro
John Zanotti	\$2,500	Great American Communications	John Donofrio	B. Taft

				L. Fisher
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5. The Ohio Secretary of State data entry process omitted numerous employer identifications provided by candidates

There are two problems we identified that affect the Ohio Secretary of State's campaign contribution database:

- The data entry process for several candidates failed to include data entry of employer names provided and "None" where no employer was marked.
- Current campaign finance reporting forms do not request employer identifications for all types of contributions.

Ohio Secretary of State Blackwell and his staff moved very quickly this year to try to upgrade Ohio's campaign finance system. Clearly the campaign finance system has improved tremendously in the past year with the release of the new campaign finance website and improved access for voters.

[Problems identified in the Ohio Secretary of State candidate campaign finance database](#)

[Recommendations](#)

[Press release](#), coverage in [Akron Beacon Journal](#) (also carried by AP), and [Columbus Dispatch](#).