

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE



AN ANALYSIS OF CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUT-OF-DISTRICT DONORS TO CANDIDATES FOR SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR AND SUPERVISOR

San Franciscans For Clean Government
March 2011

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE
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ABOUT US

“Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants”

- Justice Louis D. Brandeis

San Franciscans For Clean Government is a grassroots group of citizens interested in a healthy democracy and full disclosure of dealings at City Hall.

SFCG engages in investigation and education in order to promote good government by informing the public about money in politics and connections between lobbyists, corporations, special interests, and elected officials.

For more information email: SFCleanGov@gmail.com

Or visit us online at www.cleanupcityhall.wordpress.com

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE
MARCH 2011

I. SCOPE & METHODOLOGY

This report examines the campaign finance disclosure filings for the period of January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2010 by candidates for the office of San Francisco Mayor in the 2011 elections and for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in the 2010 elections. This report examines the public filings of each of the major candidates for San Francisco Mayor who had collected campaign contributions as of the close of the last campaign reporting period on December 31, 2010. This report also examines the public filings of the top two finalists in each of the district elections for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 2010.

The information about campaign contributions gleaned from those public filings has been analyzed and categorized. In addition to the analysis, a summary of the total campaign contributions reported by the candidates is included. Loans and donations by candidates to their own campaigns were not categorized as “campaign contributions” for the purposes of this study.

For the purposes of this study, contributions to Mayoral candidates were categorized as “out-of-district” if the address of the contributor was listed as a location other than the city and county of San Francisco. Contributions to candidates for the Board of Supervisors were categorized as “out-of-district” if the zip code of the contributor was not a zip code located within the Supervisorial District. Since zip codes boundaries do not precisely match Supervisorial District boundaries, any contribution from a zip code that even partially overlapped a Supervisorial District was considered to be a contribution from within the district.

All of the documents analyzed in this report were obtained from public records available on-line at www.sfethics.org or in person at the San Francisco Ethics Commission, 25 Van Ness Avenue, Suite 220, San Francisco, CA 94102.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE
MARCH 2011

II. FINDINGS

A. Summary of Findings

Based on the campaign finance disclosures filed to-date by the 2011 candidates for San Francisco Mayor and the 2010 candidates for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, this study found the following:

- **More than one-third (42%)** of the campaign contributions to candidates for San Francisco Mayor have come from contributors outside the city.
- Two San Francisco Mayoral candidates have raised the **majority of their donations from outside San Francisco**. Businesswoman **Joanna Rees** has raised **64%** of her donations from outside San Francisco. Assessor **Phil Ting** has raised **53%** of his donations from outside San Francisco.
- **More than two-thirds (70%)** of the campaign contributions to the leading candidates for the S.F. Board of Supervisors in 2010 were made by contributors outside the districts the candidates were running to represent.
- Three Supervisorial candidates raised more than **three-quarters of their donations from outside of their districts**. Supervisor **Carmen Chu** raised **92%** of her donations from outside her district. Supervisor **Malia Cohen** raised **86%** of her donations from outside her district. Supervisor **Jane Kim** raised **82%** of her donations from outside her district.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE
MARCH 2011

B. Total Campaign Contributions to candidates for San Francisco Mayor and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, January 2009-December 2010

This table summarizes the total campaign contributions made to-date to the leading 2011 S.F. Mayoral Candidates. According to public documents, a total of \$847,913 has been contributed to these 2011 S.F. Mayoral Candidates.

The top recipients of campaign contributions to-date are City Attorney Dennis Herrera (\$265,805), former Supervisor Bevan Dufty (\$209,984), and State Senator Leland Yee (\$164,465).

2011 S.F. Mayoral Candidate	Total Campaign Contributions 2009-2010
Dennis Herrera	\$265,805
Bevan Dufty	\$209,984
Leland Yee	\$164,465
Joanna Rees	\$154,320
Phil Ting	\$53,339
TOTAL	\$847,913

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE
MARCH 2011

C. Out-of-District Campaign Contributions to candidates for San Francisco Mayor, January 2009-December 2010

This table summarizes and ranks the campaign contributions made to the leading 2011 S.F. Mayoral Candidates from donors outside San Francisco. This table only analyzes “itemized” contributions: contributions in amounts of \$100 or greater, which candidates are required to report along with donor information, such as city and zip code. Since donor information for contributions under \$100 was not disclosed, the origin of those donations was not analyzed.

According to public documents, the top 2011 S.F. Mayoral Candidates raised 42% of their campaign contributions from outside San Francisco. The candidates who raised most of their money from donors outside San Francisco were Joanna Rees (64% of contributions from outside donors) and Assessor Phil Ting (53% of contributions from outside donors). Former Supervisor Bevan Dufty raised only 15% of his donations from outside San Francisco.

S.F. Mayoral Candidate	Total Donations (Itemized)	Donations From Outside San Francisco	% Donations From Outside San Francisco
Joanna Rees	\$153,400	\$98,570	64%
Phil Ting	\$52,400	\$27,800	53%
Leland Yee	\$157,737	\$70,700	45%
Dennis Herrera	\$261,600	\$109,750	42%
Bevan Dufty	\$168,375	\$24,650	15%
TOTAL	\$793,512	\$331,470	42%

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE
MARCH 2011

D. Total Campaign Contributions to candidates for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, January 2009-December 2010

This table summarizes the total campaign contributions made to the top two finalists in each of the district elections for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 2010. According to public records, a total of \$1,347,473 was contributed to these candidates.

Of the candidates analyzed, the top recipients of campaign contributions in the 2010 Board of Supervisors elections were Janet Reilly (\$267,118), Mark Farrell (\$265,198), Carmen Chu (\$173,664), and Scott Wiener (\$171,566).

2010 S.F. Board of Supervisors Candidate	Total Campaign Contributions
Janet Reilly (District 2)	\$267,118
Mark Farrell (District 2)	\$265,198
Carmen Chu (District 4)	\$173,664
Scott Wiener (District 8)	\$171,566
Jane Kim (District 6)	\$126,538
Malia Cohen (District 10)	\$116,879
Rafael Mandelman (District 8)	\$110,499
Debra Walker (District 6)	\$73,798
Tony Kelly (District 10)	\$42,213
TOTAL	\$1,347,473

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE
MARCH 2011

E. Out-Of-District Campaign Contributions to candidates for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, January 2009-December 2010

This table summarizes and ranks the campaign contributions made to the top two finalists in each of the district elections for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 2010 from contributors outside their districts. This table only analyzes “itemized” contributions: contributions in amounts of \$100 or greater, which candidates are required to report along with donor information, such as city and zip code. Since donor information for contributions under \$100 was not disclosed, the origin of those donations was not analyzed.

According to public documents, the top finalists in the 2010 Board of Supervisors elections raised 70% of their campaign contributions from outside of their districts. The candidates who raised the most money from donors outside their districts were Supervisor Carmen Chu (92% of donations from outside her district), Supervisor Malia Cohen (86% of donations from outside her district), and Supervisor Jane Kim (82% of donations from outside her district).

2010 Board of Supervisors Candidate	Total Donations (Itemized)	Donations From Outside District	% Donations From Outside District
Carmen Chu (D4)	\$170,208	\$155,933	92%
Malia Cohen (D10)	\$106,675	\$91,365	86%
Jane Kim (D6)	\$118,946	\$96,967	82%
Debra Walker (D6)	\$65,128	\$47,068	72%
Janet Reilly (D2)	\$265,143	\$191,503	72%
Mark Farrell (D2)	\$254,577	\$151,986	60%
Rafael Mandelman (D8)	\$93,000	\$54,971	59%
Scott Wiener (D8)	\$165,126	\$82,171	50%
Tony Kelly (D10)	\$38,595	\$16,510	43%
TOTAL	\$1,277,398	\$888,474	70%

III. CONCLUSION

As Sir Winston Churchill famously said, “democracy is the worst form of government --- except for all the others.” Fundamental to ensuring that our imperfect democracy functions properly is the understanding that public officials are elected first and foremost to represent the interests of their constituents. But the integrity of that public trust is threatened when the contributions that candidates rely on to win elections come mostly not from their constituents, but from lobbyists, interest groups, and individuals outside the candidate’s district.

When candidates raise money from contributors who are not their constituents, they must divert their precious time and attention away from the needs and concerns of those they are running to represent. While in some cases perhaps many of these out-of-district contributions may come from family and personal friends of the candidates who just happen to live somewhere else, many of them do not. These out-of-district donations thus raise the inevitable question: what do out-of-district donors expect for their money?

As this analysis shows, in both the recent San Francisco Board of Supervisors elections and in the current Mayoral campaign, contributors from outside the district the candidates are running to represent today play an outsized role in funding political campaigns in San Francisco. Voters should encourage candidates to spend most of their time, attention, and fundraising efforts during election campaigns on reaching out to their constituents, rather than to interests and individuals from outside of their districts. San Francisco’s campaign finance laws and public financing matching system should be revamped to better incentivize candidates to raise most of their money from their constituents. Because the worst form of democracy is one that encourages its officials to tend to the needs of someone other the people they were elected to represent.