

# Democracy North Carolina

1821 Green St., Durham NC 27705 • 919-489-1931 or 286-6000 • democracy-nc.org

---

For release: Tuesday, Nov. 20, 2007

Contact: Bob Hall 919-489-1931

## Fundraising Grows Four Times Faster Than Inflation For Members of Congress from North Carolina

Members of Congress from North Carolina are raising four times as much campaign money as they did a generation ago, even adjusting for inflation, according to a new report

The report shows that North Carolina's 13 members of Congress raised \$17 million during the 2006 election, with 40 percent of the funds coming from political action committees (PACs) sponsored by medical groups, utilities, unions, Realtors, political party leaders, and others.

After adjusting the value of dollar for inflation, NC incumbents with opponents raised almost twice what their counterparts did in 1992 and four times what was raised in the 1980 election.

Incumbents with opponents took in an average of \$560,600 from PACs in the 2006 election, compared to \$384,900 in 1992 (inflation adjusted dollars).

"Members of Congress are spending more time raising more money – and getting much of it from wealthy special interest groups that want a payback for their investment," said Bob Hall of Democracy North Carolina, the nonpartisan watchdog group that analyzed the data.

The research shows that challengers raised less than one third as much as the incumbents in the 2006 election, and only one succeeded – Heath Shuler in western NC's 11 Congressional District. The challengers also got only one ninth as much PAC money as the incumbents.

"The price of election is being bid up and up," Hall said. "That helps the money suppliers gain an even larger advantage over ordinary citizens, but it squeezes out many candidates and gives the appearance that elections have become auctions."

Hall noted that the partisan tilt in how Congressional districts are drawn – making some heavily Democratic and others heavily Republican – also reduces competition.

Democracy North Carolina's analysis of fundraising data shows that:

- In the money chase, Rep. Sue Myrick (R-9<sup>th</sup> District) swamped her opponent by a margin of 130 to 1 – the biggest margin among NC members with opposition in 2006 (\$1.3 million for Myrick versus \$9,760 raised by Democrat Bill Glass).

- Rep. Mike McIntyre (D-7<sup>th</sup> Dist.) had the second biggest margin, outpacing his opponent by 80 to 1, followed by Rep. Patrick Henry (R-10<sup>th</sup> Dist.) who out-fundraised his opponent 64 to 1.

- Vernon Robinson was the only challenger to surpass an incumbent, raising \$2 million in a losing race against Rep. Brad Miller (D-13<sup>th</sup> Dist). Fully 98% of Robinson's money came from individual donors, most living outside NC. By contrast, Miller raised \$1 million from individuals and \$698,630 – or 39% of his total – from PACs, most based outside NC.

- Rep. Mel Watt (D-12<sup>th</sup> Dist.) and Rep. Howard Coble (R-6<sup>th</sup> Dist.) relied most heavily on PAC funds, receiving 89% and 85% of their total fundraising from political action committees respectively. Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-1<sup>st</sup> Dist.), the only NC member of Congress with no opposition in Nov. 2006, got 70% of his funds from PACs.

- Rep. Charles Taylor (R-11<sup>th</sup> Dist.) raised \$4.1 million, far more than any other candidate, including \$2.53 million of his own money – but he lost the hotly contested race to Heath Shuler. Shuler raised \$1.85 million, second only to Vernon Robinson among challengers. (Taylor was also the top fundraiser in 1992, raising \$1.18 million (\$1.69 million in 2006 dollars.)

- Rep. Robin Hayes (R-8<sup>th</sup> Dist.), the second biggest fundraiser among NC incumbents with \$2.4 million (none of his own money), narrowly defeated challenger Larry Kissell. Kissell apparently could not convince enough out-of-state backers that he could succeed; he got \$400,000 less in PAC money than Heath Shuler.

- Besides Taylor and Hayes, Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-5<sup>th</sup> Dist.) was the only incumbent who did not defeat the challenger with at least 60% of the vote. She out-pollied Roger Dean Sharpe by 56% to 44% of the vote, but out-fundraised him by a margin of 10 to 1; in the contest for PAC funds, she outdid Sharpe by a ratio of 77 to 1.

- PACs (which include committees sponsored by political parties and Congressional leaders) shunned nearly all the challengers: five of the 12 received no PAC money in the 2006 election according to a review by the Center for Responsive Politics, and three others received less than \$4,000. Only Heath Shuler and Larry Kissell managed to get more than \$15,000.

- Rep. David Price (D-4<sup>th</sup> Dist.) and Rep. Bob Etheridge (D-2<sup>nd</sup> Dist.) each raised more than \$900,000 for the 2006 election cycle, despite weak opposition. Price, the only winner besides Howard Coble who also won as an incumbent in 1992, raised 40% more than he did that year (after adjusting for inflation.)

Democracy North Carolina is part of a coalition promoting a public financing alternative called “voter-owned” or “clean” elections, which rewards candidates who refuse special-interest donations and instead gather a large number of relatively small donations from registered voters. The coalition, NC Voters for Clean Elections, has won adoption of public financing programs for 22 appellate judicial offices and three executive branch offices in North Carolina.

A new bill in Congress would provide a similar public financing option in Congressional elections, modeled on programs used in NC, Maine, and Arizona. The “Fair Elections Now Act” (S. 1285) is sponsored by US Senators Richard Durban (D-IL) and Arlen Specter (R-PA). [See <http://www.commoncause.org/site/pp.asp?c=dkLNK1MQIwG&b=2876971> for details.]

In the next two months, reformers will encourage NC House members to sign on as sponsors of a counterpart to the Senate bill. “The money chase is destroying public faith in democratic institutions,” said Hall. “We need political leaders who will champion real reform.”

Reformers got a boost from a NC Republican on Saturday. Speaking at the annual meeting of Common Cause/NC, US Rep. Walter Jones Jr. decried the grip that wealthy lobbies have over Congress and announced he will co-sponsor the House version of the “Fair Elections Now” bill being prepared by Rep. John Larson (D-CT).

Cong. Dist.	Incumbent / Chall.	2006 North Carolina Candidate	%Votes Rec'd. 2006	Total Raised 2006	PAC Donations 2006	%Raised From PACs	Individual Donations* 2006	Total Spent 2006
2	I	Bob Etheridge (D)	64	\$907,474	\$444,105	48.9%	\$426,035	\$918,522
	C	Dan Mansell (R)	36	\$61,692	\$2,000	3.2%	\$55,740	\$61,689
3	I	Walter Jones Jr. (R)	69	\$553,971	\$292,217	52.7%	\$254,222	\$674,917
	C	Craig Weber (D)	31	\$65,716	\$0	0.0%	\$20,494	\$58,650
4	I	David Price (D)	76	\$931,155	\$364,994	39.2%	\$532,815	\$800,298
	C	Steven Acuff (R)	24	\$46,230	\$3,900	8.4%	\$21,230	\$44,247
5	I	Virginia Foxx (R)	56	\$1,408,198	\$488,165	34.7%	\$887,931	\$741,381
	C	Roger Sharpe (D)	44	\$138,998	\$6,300	4.5%	\$129,585	\$97,747
6	I	Howard Coble (R)	70	\$457,914	\$388,950	84.9%	\$56,414	\$552,271
	C	Rory Blake (D)	30	\$14,670	\$0	0.0%	\$11,195	\$14,004
7	I	Mike McIntyre (D)	73	\$901,698	\$400,031	44.4%	\$469,811	\$1,006,381
	C	Shirley Davis (R)	27	\$11,224	\$0	0.0%	\$6,029	\$26,222
8	I	Robin Hayes (R)	50	\$2,438,745	\$1,165,158	47.8%	\$918,661	\$2,475,169
	C	Larry Kissell (D)	50	\$781,742	\$175,675	22.5%	\$578,543	\$779,341
9	I	Sue Myrick (R)	67	\$1,287,147	\$580,948	45.1%	\$687,411	\$1,262,588
	C	Bill Glass (D)	33	\$9,760	\$1,350	13.8%	\$6,365	\$7,692
10	I	Patrick McHenry (R)	62	\$1,464,716	\$776,554	53.0%	\$686,787	\$1,264,776
	C	Richard Carsner (D)	38	\$22,726	\$0	0.0%	\$14,858	\$22,724
11	I	Charles Taylor (R)	46	\$4,143,723	\$681,147	16.4%	\$880,629	\$4,171,482
	C	Heath Shuler (D)	54	\$1,850,365	\$587,068	31.7%	\$1,263,132	\$1,804,365
12	I	Melvin Watt (D)	65	\$503,513	\$446,813	88.7%	\$51,096	\$535,743
	C	Ada Fisher (R)	35	\$442,542	\$0	0.0%	\$424,402	\$445,279
13	I	Brad Miller (D)	64	\$1,771,007	\$698,630	39.4%	\$1,068,922	\$1,754,817
	C	Vernon Robinson (R)	36	\$2,049,621	\$12,750	0.6%	\$2,015,928	\$2,207,519
<b>Totals for 2006</b>		<b>12 Incumbents /Challengers</b>		<b>\$16,769,261</b>	<b>\$6,727,712</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>\$6,920,734</b>	<b>\$16,158,345</b>
		<b>12 Challengers</b>		<b>\$5,495,286</b>	<b>\$789,043</b>	<b>14.4%</b>	<b>\$4,547,501</b>	<b>\$5,569,479</b>
<b>&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>Average per Incumb. w/Chall.</b>		<b>\$1,397,438</b>	<b>\$560,643</b>	<b>40.1%</b>	<b>\$576,728</b>	<b>\$1,346,529</b>
1	I	G. K. Butterfield (D)	100	\$387,424	\$271,105	70.0%	\$114,415	\$324,758
<b>Total for 2006</b>		<b>All 13 Incumbents</b>		<b>\$17,156,685</b>	<b>\$6,998,817</b>	<b>40.8%</b>	<b>\$7,035,149</b>	<b>\$16,483,103</b>
				<b>Total Raised</b>	<b>From PACs</b>		<b>Individuals</b>	<b>Total Spent</b>
<b>&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>Average per Incumb. w/Chall.</b>		<b>\$145,539</b>	<b>\$63,975</b>		<b>\$74,078</b>	<b>\$132,169</b>
<b>&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>Ave. Adjusted for Inflation</b>		<b>\$356,076</b>	<b>\$156,521</b>		<b>\$181,239</b>	<b>\$323,365</b>
		<b>Ratio: 2006 Ave. to 1980 Ave.</b>		<b>3.9 to 1</b>	<b>3.6 to 1</b>		<b>3.2 to 1</b>	<b>4.2 to 1</b>
<b>&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>Average per Incumb. w/Chall.</b>		<b>\$522,174</b>	<b>\$267,854</b>		<b>\$181,817</b>	<b>\$477,597</b>
<b>&gt;&gt;&gt;</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>Ave. Adjusted for Inflation</b>		<b>\$750,322</b>	<b>\$384,885</b>		<b>\$261,256</b>	<b>\$686,269</b>
		<b>Ratio: 2006 Ave. to 1992 Ave.</b>		<b>1.9 to 1</b>	<b>1.5 to 1</b>		<b>2.2 to 1</b>	<b>2.0 to 1</b>

Sources: Based on data reported to the Federal Elections Commission by candidates and compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics (2006 data) and by Institute for Southern Studies (1980/1992, report by Bob Hall, Feb. 11, 1993).

\* "Individual Donations" do not include contributions from the candidates to their campaigns.