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Regardless of Party, Big Fundraisers are Big Winners in Senate Races

Submitted by Owen Poindexter on Wednesday, Nov 3rd, 2010

Nov. 3, 2010 - Of the 35 Senate candidates who won election on Tuesday, 29 of them out-raised their opponents, some by wide margins (two races, Alaska and Washington have not been decided). For comparison, in what was widely considered a big victory, Republicans won 23 out of the 35 races. As successful as the G.O.P. was, well-funded candidates as a group beat them by 6 seats.

The Narrowest Victories

Of the five closest races with a declared outcome*, the winner held a financial advantage in all but one of them. In Colorado, Democrat [Michael Bennett](#) (\$11,463,411), who [barely squeaked out a victory](#) raised three times more than his Republican opponent, Ken Buck (\$3,827,432). Republican [Mark Kirk](#) (\$12,759,089) won President Obama's former Senate seat in Illinois by a narrow margin with the help of \$4.4 million more than his opponent, Democrat Alexi Giannoulias (\$8,404,220). The result in Pennsylvania was similar, where Republican Pat Toomey (\$14,832,115) won a close contest over Democrat [Joseph Sestak](#) (\$9,271,042), spending \$5.5 million dollars more than him in the process.

Other Close Contests

In two other close senate races, Senate Majority Leader [Harry Reid](#) kept his Nevada seat (\$22,635,642), edging out Sharon Angle (\$21,470,516), after having raised \$1.2 million more than her (Reid and Angle were two of the four Senate candidates to raise over \$20 million) and Ron Johnson (\$12,837,349) ousted longterm incumbent Wisconsin Democrat [Russ Feingold](#) (\$18,249,555), despite Feingold's advantage of \$5.4 million.

Exceptions to the Rule

In addition to Johnson, five other candidates won despite being outraised. The largest example of this was Linda McMahon (\$46,682,270), who lost the Connecticut seat to Democrat Richard Blumenthal (\$7,600,984), despite giving her own campaign over \$46 million, more than twice the total raised by any other candidate except Arizona Republican [John McCain](#) (\$28,608,880), who retained his seat easily. The other candidates who won despite lower fundraising totals were Democrat Joe Manchin in West Virginia (\$3,351,829), Democrat Chris Coons in Delaware (\$3,294,824), Republican Kelly Ayotte in New Hampshire (\$4,403,599), who was just a quarter of a million shy of her opponent, and Republican [John Boozman](#) in Arkansas (\$3,223,075). All other winners outraised their opponents, with a median advantage of \$4.4 million.

* *At the time of writing, the Washington State senate race between Democrat [Patty Murray](#) and Republican [Dino Rossi](#) was still to close to call. Murray has raised twice what Rossi has (\$15.3 million to \$7.4 million).*

Campaign contributions data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics' [OpenSecrets](#), and includes PAC and individual contributions. Date range of contributions: January 1, 2009 - November 3, 2010.

About our data



Read the details about our [data sources and methodology](#). Data refers to direct contributions to the campaign committees of elected legislators. For example, contribution totals exclude contributions to party committees such as the RNC or the DNC and exclude contributions made to individuals that did not win their election. For U.S. Congress, contributions data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics ([OpenSecrets.org](#)) and legislative data provided by [GovTrack.us](#). California contributions data provided by the National Institute on Money in State Politics ([FollowTheMoney.org](#)). Wisconsin contributions data provided by the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign ([wisdc.org](#)).

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