

# Money in Politics: How Much is Spent

*Presented by Julia Kayser*

The amount of money spent on political campaigns has increased dramatically over the years, most conspicuously in the 2012 election cycle. We're not talking about pennies - to give you an idea of the amounts:

According to the Center for Responsive Politics, the total amount spent on federal elections in 2012 - including by candidates for the House, the Senate, and White House as well as spending by the parties, PACs and outside groups- reached almost 6.3 billion dollars.

In congressional elections alone, candidate expenditures for major party nominees has increased from less than 500 million dollars in 1974 to over 1,500 million dollars in 2012.

Non-candidate spending - that is, spending by groups and individuals other than the candidate -- on the 2012 congressional races was \$714 million dollars, which was greater than the amount of non-candidate spending in the presidential race..

Nearly 60 groups reported spending money to influence congressional elections in 2012, with 21 largest groups accounting for 45 percent of the total. Spending by political parties accounted for only 34% of the total, with smaller groups and individual donors making up the rest.

After adjusting for inflation, the total expenditures for all major party nominees in House and Senate campaigns in 2012 increased 450% over the expenditures in 1974. This outpaces the increase in both college tuition and gas prices.

On the front page of the October 11<sup>th</sup> New York Times was an article indicating that already, in the current presidential election cycle, only 158 families, along with the companies they own or control, have contributed 176 million dollars to election campaigns. That's something to think about.