



SCHOOL OF LAW

PROSECUTORS AND POLITICS PROJECT

Law Enforcement Campaign Contributions

As protests against police violence continue, law enforcement campaign contributions to elected officials have begun to receive scrutiny. Our national database of campaign contributions generates a snapshot of law enforcement donations in local prosecutor elections across the country.

\$900,000+

Amount law enforcement donated to local prosecutor campaigns

\$450,000+

Went to only 20 candidates

60%

Donations come from organizations

SUCH AS POLICE UNIONS AND PACS FOR SHERIFF CAMPAIGNS

40%

Donations come from law enforcement-affiliated individuals

INCLUDING RETIREES

ABOUT THE PROJECT

A research initiative founded in 2018 that studies the role of prosecutors in the criminal justice system, focusing on the political aspects of their selection and their political power.

57%

OF ALL LAW ENFORCEMENT MONEY DONATED WENT TO ELECTIONS IN JUST

3

 STATES:

CALIFORNIA, FLORIDA, NEW YORK

WHY IT MATTERS

Prosecutors work closely with law enforcement. They make decisions about credibility of police and legality of their actions. If a police officer shoots an unarmed civilian, the prosecutor is responsible for deciding whether to bring criminal charges. If the prosecutor has received money from law enforcement, the public may question the legitimacy of those decisions.

OF THE TOP 20 LAW ENFORCEMENT RECIPIENTS

8

Incumbents

7

Open Seat Candidates

5

Challengers

10

Republicans

6

Democrats

4

Ran in California's nonpartisan election

80%

Were running in contested elections



SCHOOL OF LAW

PROSECUTORS AND POLITICS PROJECT

Law Enforcement Campaign Contributions

Candidate Who Benefits the Most from Law Enforcement Donations



\$490,000+

District attorney Michael Hestrin raised \$490K when he challenged incumbent Paul Zellerbach in 2014 (Riverside, California)

30%

was from law enforcement sources

\$142,000

was from Riverside Sheriffs Association Political Education Fund

Preliminary data from the 2018 election shows a similar pattern

TOP 20 RECIPIENTS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT DOLLARS

State	County/District	Amount	Candidate
California	Riverside	\$149,300.00	Hestrin, Michael
Florida	4	\$40,534.00	Corey, Angela (R)
California	Sacramento	\$38,822.00	Schubert, Anne Marie
New York	Nassau	\$32,725.00	Murray, Kate (R)
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	\$27,399.00	Grossman, Beth (R)
Massachusetts	Suffolk	\$23,120.00	Conley, Daniel (D)
Florida	18	\$21,529.20	Archer, Phil (R)
Ohio	Franklin	\$21,290.00	O'Brien, Ron (R)
California	Solano	\$20,949.00	Abrams, Krishna
New York	Orange	\$18,828.00	Hoovler, David (R)
New York	Kings	\$18,500.00	Gonzalez, Eric (D)
California	Napa	\$16,050.00	Kensok, Tom
Texas	9	\$15,826.00	Ligon, Brett (R)
Florida	13	\$15,700.00	Ober, Mark (R)
Ohio	Fairfield	\$15,000.00	Witt, Kyle (R)
Massachusetts	Norfolk	\$12,375.00	Morrissey, Michael (D)
New York	Suffolk	\$12,000.00	Sini, Timothy (D)
Indiana	60	\$10,975.00	Cotter, Kenneth (D)
Illinois	Cook	\$10,650.00	Pfannkuche, Christopher (R)
New York	Richmond	\$9,000.00	McMahon, Michael (D)

Campaign contributions from law enforcement for 2012-2017 elections can be found in the **UNC Dataverse**.

The database includes only direct campaign contributions, not independent expenditures, and the affiliation of one third of all money donated was not specified.

As a result, the database likely understates the total amount of law enforcement dollars in prosecutor elections.

SUPPORT

This study was made possible by a generous gift from the Vital Projects Fund, Inc.

CONTACT

Carissa Byrne Hessick
chessick@email.unc.edu