

**Transparency and Campaign Spending in Minnesota, Report 5:
Overall Spending on Minnesota Elections***

Kathryn Pearson
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Minnesota
kpearson@umn.edu

Lawrence R. Jacobs
Mondale Chair
Humphrey School of Public Affairs
University of Minnesota
ljacobs@umn.edu

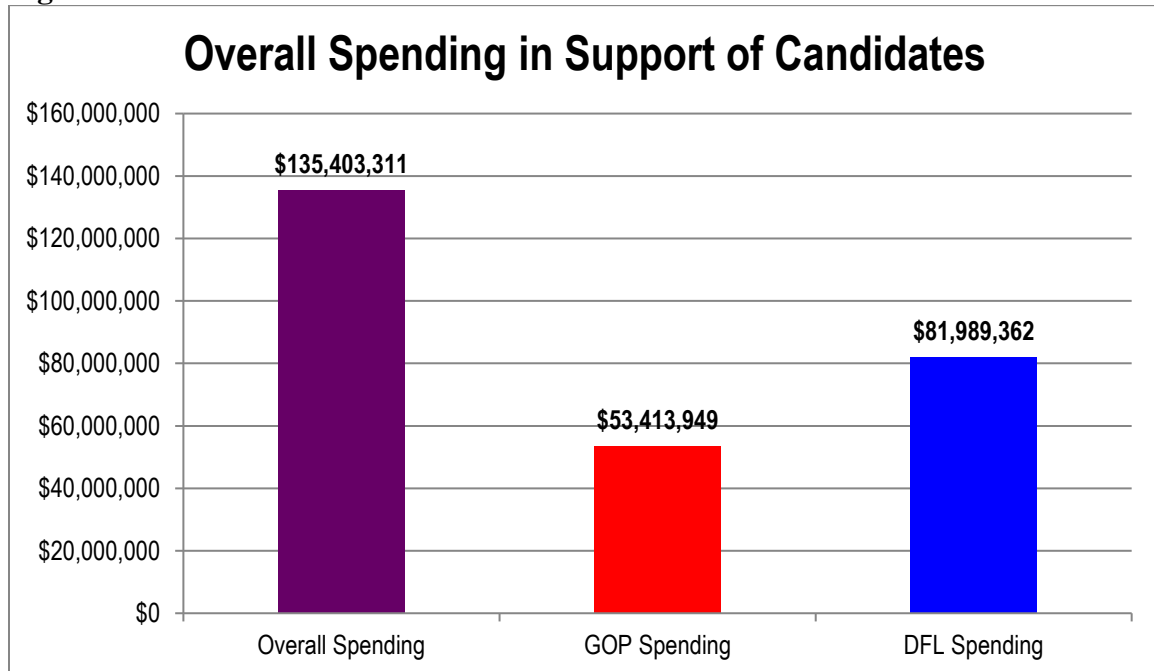
November 4, 2018

* This is a project of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. We are grateful for the contributions of Madeline Salucka and Matthew Motta. The authors are solely responsible for the content of this report. Other parties who use or draw conclusions from this research are solely responsible for their own views, which do not necessarily reflect those of the original authors. This research is supported by a grant from the McKnight Foundation.

Over \$135 million has been spent on Minnesota’s 2018 state and federal elections (Figure 1). As stunning as this total is, it will be larger after groups and donors disclose their spending during the final week of the campaign.

Support for Democratic candidates was more than 50% higher than support for Republicans – nearly \$82 million versus \$53 million.

Figure 1.



Note: Spending on state campaigns includes the period beginning on January 1, 2018; the spending on federal elections includes the period beginning January 1, 2017, although there were no independent expenditures in 2017.

More than \$75 million was spent on Minnesota’s eight U.S. House races, with a focus on Minnesota’s 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 8th Districts.

Independent expenditures from parties, groups, corporations, unions, and associations accounted for much of this spending. It accounted for 64% of the spending in support of Republican candidates for Congress compared to 49% in support of Democratic candidates.

By contrast, spending in Minnesota’s two U.S. Senate races totaled only around \$25 million, and 90% of the spending was in the form of direct contributions to the candidates rather than independent expenditures.

Independent expenditures accounted for most of the spending to support Tim Walz’s gubernatorial campaign (71%) and the Republican statehouse campaigns (60%).

Figure 2.

