

Calif. ballot measures see \$65M in 2Q

By Alison Noon, AP

SACRAMENTO – Campaigns supporting and opposing California's 17 ballot initiatives have reported raising at least \$65 million from April through June, according to paperwork filed this week with the secretary of state.

The total does not include money spent by people not coordinated with official ballot campaigns.

The vast majority of money spent to influence elections typically comes in the three months before Election Day. If that holds true, California could see a record amount spent on ballot initiatives this year.

A handful of races for the state Legislature are also drawing heavy spending, and candidates for governor are fundraising for a contest still two years out.

Here are some of the initiatives and races attracting the most fundraising in the last quarter:

Drug prices

Pharmaceutical companies reported raising \$16.5 million to oppose Proposition 61, an initiative to limit what the state can pay for prescription drugs, bringing the opposition campaign's cash on hand to a whopping \$66 million. The only major contribution supporting the initiative to mandate that California pay no more than the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs does for prescriptions was \$5 million from the AIDS Healthcare Foundation.

Tax increases

An association of hospitals gave a \$9 million loan to Proposition 56, the campaign for a \$2 tax increase on every pack of cigarettes sold in California. Initiative supporters ended last quarter with about \$10 million in the bank. Tobacco companies R.J. Reynolds and Altria affiliates gave \$16 million to defeat it in July, after the quarter ended. A separate proposal to extend a tax on high-income earners through 2030 to benefit public schools and health care has drawn no opponents, but that hasn't kept supporters from fundraising. The California Teachers Association has given \$13 million this year to support Proposition 55 and union groups gave another \$900,000 from April through June, bringing the campaign's bank account to \$14 million.

Marijuana legalization

Six separate campaigns supporting an initiative to legalize recreational marijuana received a total of \$6.8 million from April through June, and have reported another \$3 million since then. Law enforcement officers and anti-drug associations have given about \$130,000 to a campaign opposing Proposition 64 since April.

Hospital fees for Medi-Cal

Opponents of the proposal requiring voter approval of changes to hospital fees for state-subsidized health care revved up two campaigns with nearly \$8 million in contributions in the last quarter. But opponents' \$3.6 million cash on hand is still far less than the \$18 million Proposition 52 advocates have in the bank, despite receiving no contributions since March.

Criminal justice reform

Gov. Jerry Brown, a Democrat, contributed \$2.6 million from his ballot initiative committee for his proposal to expand sentencing credits in prison, allow parole for nonviolent felons and make other reforms to the state criminal justice

system. The California Democratic Party, unions and a few individuals gave another \$2.3 million to Proposition 57. No opposition campaign has been reported.

Gun control

A proposal by Democratic Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom to require background checks to buy firearm ammunition and prohibit large-capacity magazines reported \$1.8 million in contributions from April through June, and received another \$400,000 from Silicon Valley entrepreneur Sean Parker on July 1. Opponents of Proposition 63 reported contributions totaling about \$200,000 last quarter.

Legislature

Democratic Assembly candidate Eloise Reyes reported her campaign was in the red at the end of June, having spent everything to finish the June 7 primary 8.5 percentage points behind incumbent Democratic Assemblywoman Cheryl Brown, who had \$272,000. The race to represent San Bernardino County has drawn more than \$2 million in independent expenditures. In Senate District 15 in the east San Francisco Bay, Sen. Jim Beall reported \$125,000 on hand June 30 while Assemblywoman Nora Campos, also a San Jose Democrat, had \$21,000 after she lost the primary by 22.5 percentage points.

2018 governor

State Treasurer John Chiang reported that he raised \$2.3 million for his 2018 bid for governor of California after joining the race in May. A fellow Democrat, Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, reported raising \$1.6 million in the first half of 2016, bringing his gubernatorial war chest to \$6.4 million. None of the other 11 lesser-known candidates who have officially joined the race have filed financial statements.