

Influences on Georgia Legislation

We know it happens. But we might now know how much it happens. Georgia - and national - campaign contributors create a maze of giving patterns that makes it difficult to fully comprehend the magnitude of the effort made by industry groups to influence legislation.

To illustrate the magnitude, the Georgia Ethics Commission database, available through the Internet, was 'mined' to better understand just how much the Outdoor Advertising Industry has spent over the last decade to influence legislation. There are two sources of campaign contributions:

1. The Outdoor Advertising Industry PAC and operating companies
2. The lobbyists retained by the industry to represent their interest in the General Assembly.

This report summarizes just the contributions of the industry. More details of each contribution to each legislator or candidate including dates, amounts, in kind and more are available at www.scenicga.org/OAInfluence.html. It also documents how much was contributed to legislators who currently sit on the House and Senate Transportation Committees.

Contributions by Outdoor Advertising Industry to all Candidates by Year**		
Year	Monetary	In Kind
2001	\$15,500.00	\$0.00
2002	\$18,900.00	\$0.00
2003	\$4,000.00	\$350.00
2004	\$27,400.00	\$13,353.00
2005	\$15,490.00	\$676.00
2006 *	\$66,975.00	\$8,832.00
2007	\$53,550.00	\$0.00
2008	\$94,750.00	\$0.00
2009	\$71,989.00	\$0.00
Total	\$368,554.00	\$23,211.00

Notes:

* 2006 was the first year the industry began a major effort to remove the trees along Georgia highways which it is still trying to pass in SB 164 after it was defeated in the 2009 session but carried over by a vote for reconsideration.

**Does not include contributions by employees, family, associates and customers of OA Industry.

Equally enlightening are the contributions by the OA Industry to current members of the House Transportation Committee that controls the flow of legislation favorable to the industry.

Contributions by Outdoor Advertising Industry to House Transportation Committee Members		
Year	Monetary	In Kind
2004	\$2,300.00	\$4,300.00
2005	\$1,400.00	\$0.00
2006	\$13,200.00	\$200.00
2007	\$11,700.00	\$0.00
2008	\$15,150.00	\$0.00
2009	\$10,750.00	\$0.00
Total	\$54,500.00	\$4,500.00

One member of the House Transportation Committee has received \$18,725 of the total from the industry. Since lobbyists would make the point that their contributions are not all related to the outdoor advertising industry agendas, those have been omitted from this summary as have been their payments for meals, tickets and special events.

Prepared by the Campaign for Safe and Scenic Highways