



The  
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## The Vermont Legislative Research Service

<http://www.uvm.edu/~vlrs/>



### Legislative Campaign Spending in the 2016 Vermont General Election

In this report, we compile legislative campaign spending data from the 2016 Vermont general election. We do so by cross-listing the Office of the Secretary of State's data on primary election candidates with data from the Office's campaign finance database.<sup>1</sup> To confirm the general election winners and their incumbency statuses, we use the Vermont General Assembly's lists of former and sitting legislators.<sup>2</sup> We present legislative campaign spending data based on each candidate's district size, primary status, and incumbency status for Vermont State Senate and House campaigns.

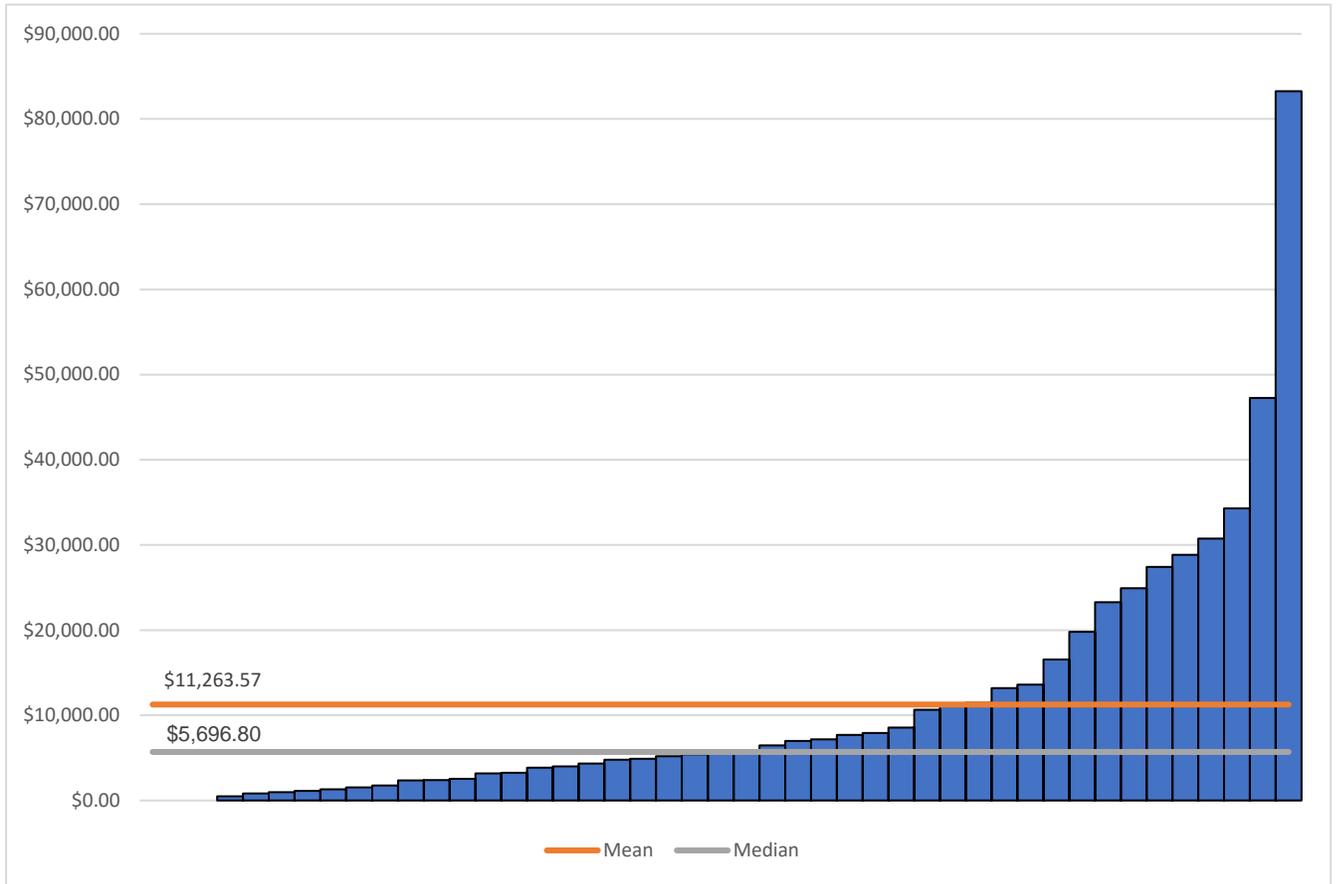
### Methodology

A total of 299 candidate spending reports from the Secretary of State's database were considered in this report. We integrated these reports with primary and general election results to compile a master list of candidate profiles. Using data from this list, we calculated the mean (average) and median spending among House and Senate candidates in different electoral contexts. Our report focused on total spending in House and Senate races and analyzed spending by district size, whether the candidate faced a primary opponent, and incumbency status. We present the data in a series of figures below.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Secretary of State, "2016 General Election Winners Listing," August 19, 2016, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.sec.state.vt.us/media/777617/2016-primary-election-winners-listing.pdf>; Office of the Secretary of State, "Elections Division Campaign Finance: Search Filed Reports," accessed February 10, 2017, <https://www.campaignfinance.sec.state.vt.us/Public/ViewFiledReports#>.

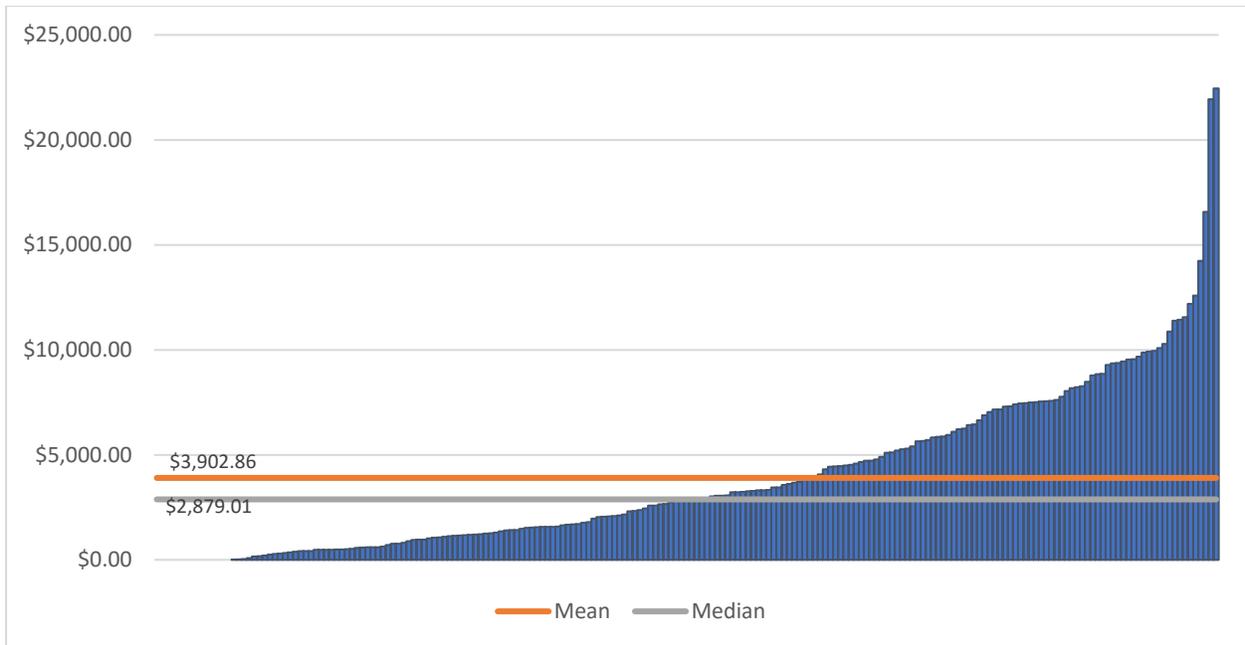
<sup>2</sup> Vermont General Assembly, "Legislators: All Legislators," accessed February 10, 2017, <http://legislature.vermont.gov/people/all/2016>.



**Figure 1: State Senate Candidate Campaign Expenditures 2016**

Note: Each blue bar represents the total spending of a Senate candidate. The orange line represents average spending among all candidates in the Senate. The grey line represents median spending among all candidates in the Senate. As displayed above, the average spending was \$11,264.57, and the median spending was \$5,696.80

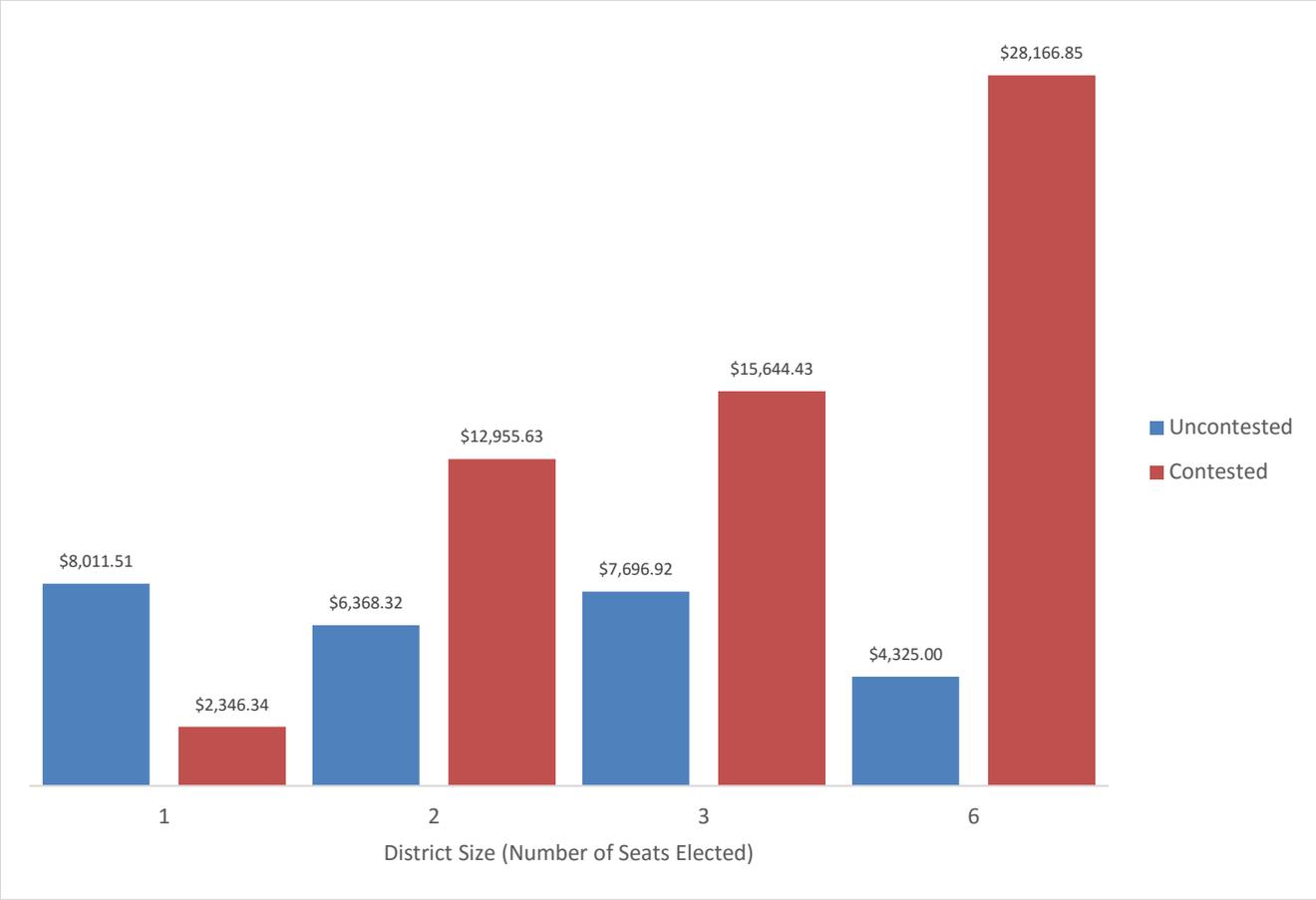
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**Figure 2: State House Candidate Campaign Expenditures 2016**

Note: Each blue bar represents the total spending of a House candidate. The orange line represents average spending among all candidates in the House. The grey line represents median spending among all candidates in the House. As displayed above, the average spending was \$3,902.86, and the median spending was \$2,879.01.

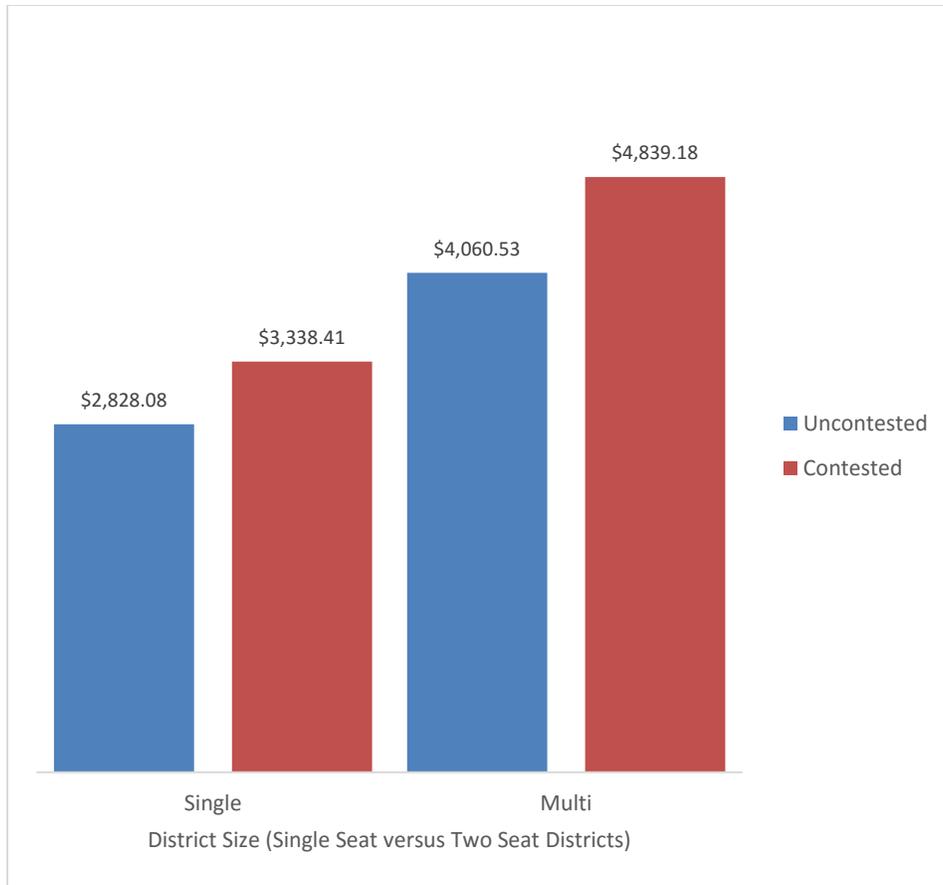
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**Figure 3: Average Spending by District Size and Primary Status in 2016 Senate Races**

Note: Each blue bar represents the average spending of Senate candidates who had uncontested primary elections. Each red bar represents the average spending of Senate candidates who had contested primary elections. Bars are grouped by district size. As displayed above, Senate candidates in multi-member districts with contested primaries spent more, on average, than candidates in multi-member districts with uncontested primaries.

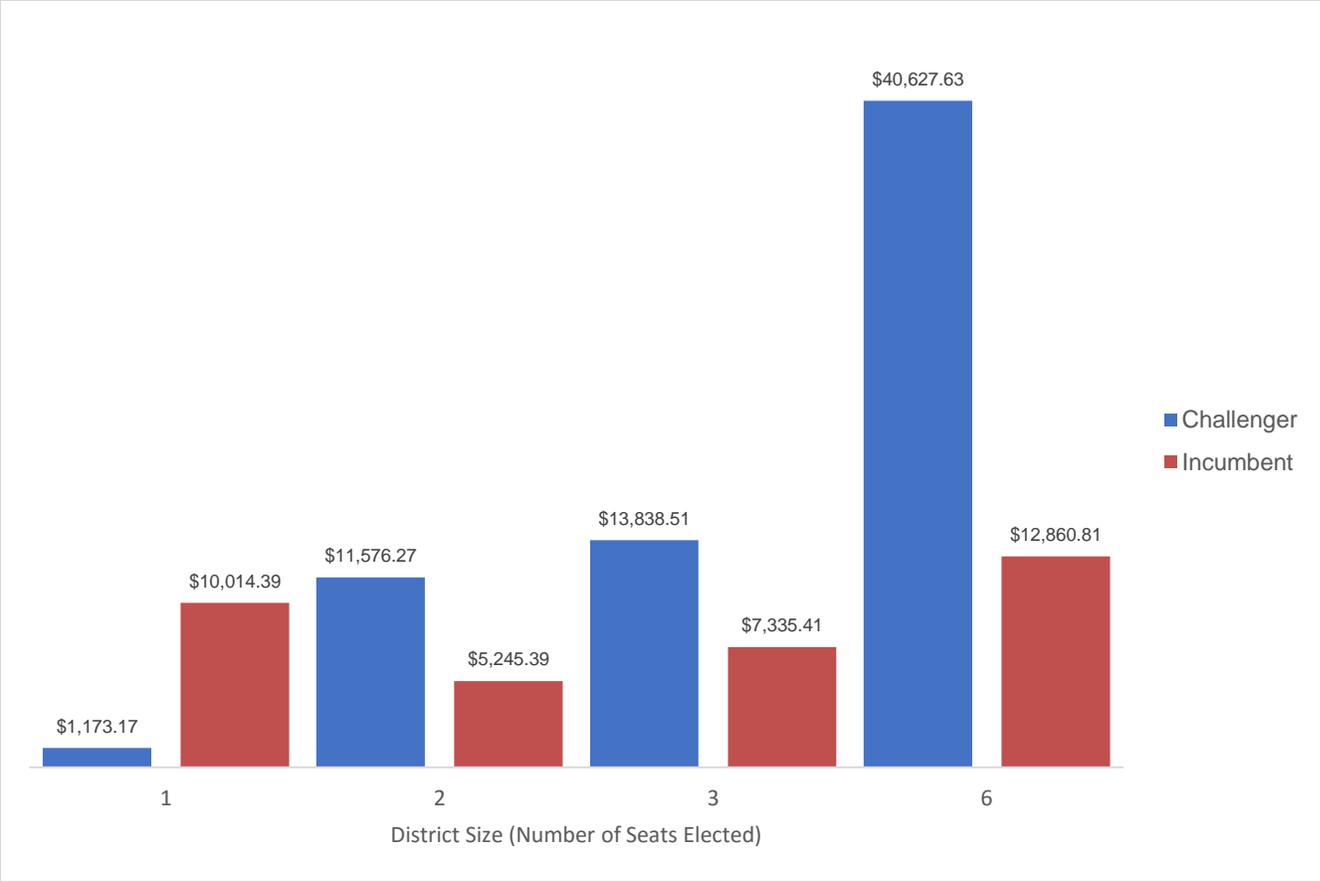
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**Figure 4: Average Spending by District Size and Primary Status in 2016 House Races**

Note: Each blue bar represents the average spending of House candidates who had uncontested primary elections. Each red bar represents the average spending of House candidates who had contested primary elections. Bars are grouped by district size. As displayed above, House candidates with contested primaries spent more, on average, than House candidates with uncontested primaries.

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**Figure 5: Average Spending by District Size and Incumbency Status in 2016 Senate Races**

Note: Each blue bar represents the average spending of Senate candidates who ran as non-incumbents. Each red bar represents the average spending of Senate candidates who ran as incumbents. Bars are grouped by district size. As displayed above, non-incumbent candidates in multi-member Senate districts spent more, on average, than incumbent candidates in multi-member Senate districts.

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**Figure 6: Average Spending by District Size and Incumbency Status in 2016 House Races**

Note: Each blue bar represents the average spending of House candidates who ran as non-incumbents. Each red bar represents the average spending of House candidates who ran as incumbents. Bars are grouped by district size. As displayed above, non-incumbent candidates in the House spent more, on average, than incumbent candidates.

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## Summary of Results

The figures presented in this report show the campaign expenditures made by Vermont State Senate and House candidates for the 2016 election. Expenditures were broken down by district size, incumbency status, and whether the candidates had faced an opponent in the primary election. Each of the six charts displayed in this report reflects a trend. In Figure 1 and Figure 2, there is a substantial difference between mean and median spending. This difference indicates that, in both the House and Senate contests, a majority of candidates spent less than the statewide averages for legislative campaign spending, which are \$11,264.57 and \$5,696.80 in the Senate and House respectively. Figure 3 and Figure 4 show that candidates who ran in contested primaries spent more, on average, than candidates who did not. Figure 5 and Figure 6 show that candidates who ran as non-incumbents spent more, on average, than candidates who ran as incumbents.

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This report was completed on March 9, 2017 by David Brandt, Kaitlin Clark, Katja Ostojic, and Lauren Rayson under the supervision of Professors Eileen Burgin, Alec Ewald and Jack Gierzynski and with the assistance of Research Assistant Laura Felone in response to a request from Senator Christopher A. Pearson.

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Disclaimer: This report has been compiled by undergraduate students at the University of Vermont under the supervision of Professor Anthony Jack Gierzynski, Professor Alec Ewald and Professor Eileen Burgin. The material contained in the report does not reflect the official policy of the University of Vermont.