

**The Piper Fund Disclosure
Report:
The Role of Data Compilation
and Analysis
in the State Campaign Finance
Reform Community**

By Michael Caudell-Feagan

May 2000

Table of Contents

Preface	1
The Interaction Between Piper Fund Databases and the Media	2
Lessons Learned and New Challenges for Piper Fund Databases.....	5
The Media as Ally	7
Can the Piper Fund Enhance Media Work in the States?.....	8
Accountability: Ensuring Compliance and Closing Loopholes	11
Electronic Filing and Disclosure	12
Designing and Evaluating a Reform Agenda	14
Building a Base for Comprehensive Reform	15
Grassroots Outreach	15
Organized Constituencies	17
Who Should Have Access to Databases, and How Should They Be Used?	21
Is Data Analysis Too Blunt An Instrument?	23
Conclusion and Recommendations	25
Appendix A — List of Interviews	31
Appendix B — UVI Wheel of Fortune Cards	36
Appendix C — Selected List of Reports and Press Releases Produced from Campaign Finance Databases	37
Appendix D — Legal Cases	45

Preface

In the Piper Fund's three-year history, a growing number of grant recipients have collected reports from political candidates on the contributions and expenditures of their campaigns and have incorporated them into searchable databases that are similar to those developed by the Center for Responsive Politics. The staff and board of the Piper Fund requested an evaluation of its grantees' database projects, not to critique the overall performance of specific grantees, but to draw lessons from the experiments undertaken by state partners as they have incorporated the databases into their work. Rather than surveying all of the states that have databases in place, I visited representatives from six states that were perceived to have considerable experience operating database projects or to have a particularly interesting facet to their work:

Georgia	Project South and Georgia Rural Urban Summit
Idaho	United Vision for Idaho
North Carolina	Democracy South/North Carolina Alliance for Democracy
Ohio	Ohio Citizens Policy Center/Ohio Citizen Action
Texas	Texans for Public Justice
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Democracy Campaign and Wisconsin Citizen Action

I attended meetings with staff who operate databases and representatives of the constituencies targeted as an audience or partner of the data analysis. The entire list of the more than 100 people interviewed — consisting of political reporters, newspaper editors, nonprofit advocates, union leaders, academics, legislators, and administrative agency staff — appears in Appendix A. To supplement the information gathered from these site visits, I also attended a media training workshop on campaign data analysis and interviewed staff of national resource centers and staff from five additional states receiving Piper Fund grants:

Connecticut	Connecticut Citizen Research Group/Citizen Action
Maine	Maine Citizen Leadership Fund Money and Politics Project
Massachusetts	Commonwealth Coalition Money and Politics Project
Oregon	Western States Center Money in Politics Research Action Project
West Virginia	Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

The majority of the people I interviewed responded with a depth and honesty that I deeply appreciate. The analysis contained in these pages greatly benefited from the wisdom offered by leaders in the reform community. This report documents impressive successes, instructive failures, and missed opportunities. Although the database projects reviewed have made significant strides in three years, they have not reached their full potential. Yet, some of the work that has been done exceeds the Piper Fund's highest expectations and demonstrates the invaluable role that data analysis can perform. State partners and the Piper Fund should be proud of what has been accomplished and excited by what can be anticipated in the coming years.

*Michael Caudell-Feagan
May 11, 2000*

If you don't exist in the media, for all practical purposes, you don't exist.
— Daniel Schorr, Commentator with National Public Radio

The Interaction Between Piper Fund Databases and the Media

The reform community has struggled for many years to get the media to pay sufficient attention to the destructive character of potentially influential political campaign contributions. When state partners have been able to devote adequate resources to database projects that document contributions, they have enjoyed remarkable success. Sites that have databases in place can produce stacks of press clips referencing their reports and releases. Some reform advocates have proactively pitched story ideas, prompted reporters and editors to incorporate database analysis into their repertoires, and developed mutually beneficial alliances with the media.

To a certain extent, this success can be attributed to the porous nature of the media and the dismal state of capitol press rooms and investigative reporting. All state capitol news bureaus face increasing budget constraints. To cite but one example, the staff of the *Wisconsin State Journal*, the second largest newspaper in the state, shrank to one third of its modest size between 1995 and 2000. In state after state, reporters have cited a new "bottom-line mentality" and editorial disinterest as reasons for their failure to ferret out or nail down a money and politics story.

Nationwide, only 513 newspaper reporters — plus 113 wire service reporters, most of them with the AP — now cover state government full time. By comparison more than 3,000 media credentials were issued for this year's Super Bowl. . . . And in most states, TV reporters have become an endangered species, rarely glimpsed except for a major speech or press conference.

— American Journalism Review
<http://ajr.newslink.org/special/3-2.html>

What is intriguing is that dominant newspapers rely heavily on Piper databases, even when they maintain independent databases. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and the *Dallas Morning News*, for example, have built extensive databases for in-depth investigative series on campaign contributions. Unfortunately, such series are rare, and, at best, newspaper-operated databases are relegated to providing fodder for biannual horse race style coverage during an election cycle, when databases operated by nonprofit organizations often fail to keep up with the pace of election filings.¹ According to David Poole, a staff member of a Virginia newspaper consortium database project that includes the *Washington Post*, "Newspapers have done a poor job of weaving the database project into the fabric of their daily coverage. The papers generally write big take-outs each Sunday after an update, but then let it lie fallow."

Although reporters acknowledge that potential treasures can be mined from their newspapers' databases, they prefer to rely on the databases funded with Piper grants for a variety of reasons. According to Dan Bice, a political reporter at the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, "Our database is compiled by a temp service and is filled with data entry errors. The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's data is simply more accurate. I either directly access the data on their web site or ask one of their staff to run a series of queries and can get what I need quickly and accurately." According to a reporter at an Ohio newspaper, "Our staff has been decimated and I simply don't

¹ Databases compiled by a newspaper or consortium of media outlets stringently restrict access to their members. In contrast, several Piper grant recipients provide access to academics, nonprofit advocates, politicians, reporters, and the general public.

have time to fingerprint and analyze the available data. Even if I did, I still need a source to credit and some useful quotes characterizing the results."

Besides providing accurate data, context, quotes, and people adept at manipulating data spreadsheets, Piper grant recipients serve as an important prod to ensure a steady drumbeat of media coverage. If nonprofit database projects are adequately staffed, they serve as an unofficial adjunct to the newsroom. During several of my conversations with reporters and editors, they cited times when they directly requested a data run or subtly suggested that a particular report would receive prominent coverage should it be produced. Some of the hardest-hitting investigative reports did not emerge from an official study or from a release by Piper partners, but from a tip received from a newspaper's source or a reporter's instinct that was confirmed by a state nonprofit data analyst.

The Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's database and staff are invaluable. They have produced data on special orders from which I have generated a lot of good stories.
— Jeff Mayer, Wisconsin State Journal

It is not difficult to establish a base level of credibility for a database project. For example, whereas Ohio perceived the need to partner with a leading journalism program and a public policy institute, entities without these imprimaturs and with a history of aggressive policy advocacy have been able to establish strong relationships with the press and avoid having their work discounted or labeled. Because databases are constructed directly from candidate filings with state agencies and are arrayed in the standardized framework developed by the Center for Responsive Politics, the data are presumed to be accurate and reliable.²

The credibility bestowed on an organization that operates a database distinguishes it from other reform advocates in the state. As if they coordinated their characterizations, reporters and editors in three states referred to the Common Cause spokesperson as a quick "shrill quote" with limited impact. Although they may not have agreed with the policy prescription advanced by the organization wielding the database, the value of this service and the ability to accompany opinions with hard facts led to respect both in the newsroom and in the actual print or electronic coverage. Even the self-styled "bomb thrower," Texans for Public Justice, is lauded for its contributions by hard-nosed editors at the major Texas newspapers.

Coverage of reports issued by a project does not necessarily lead to the same depth of interdependence between the press and the database project. For a reporter to explore a campaign finance angle in an emerging story, data analysts must be able to respond to research requests within the constraints of a paper's deadline or provide direct access to the database. An even greater level of respect and penetration occurs when there is someone on the database staff who knows the state's political dynamics, has the instincts of a reporter, and has gained a level of confidence in the press corps.

Bob Hall, of Democracy South, is widely recognized for possessing all of these traits, and the testimony of Steve Ford at the *News and Observer* articulately summarizes the impact that his data analysis has had in North Carolina. "Hall bores into contribution records with the instincts of the best investigative reporters . . . The *News and Observer* and the *Charlotte Observer* have

² I could identify no instances where a politician or other party successfully challenged the data, although the interpretations contained in reports and press releases were vigorously disputed.

sporadically nibbled around the edges of this issue but Hall acts as a spur to go further, deeper and sustain. He has grudging respect even from those who disagree and his work has led to a significant increase in reporting on the topic. The data and reports have also helped to focus editorial board attention on this topic. . . . While the politicians' perspective and stake in the status quo often rubs off on the capitol press corps, the reformers' steady string of success at uncovering the trails of money in campaigns is beginning to overcome the 'ultra-realist' view that the issue has no political mileage."

Although many would like to canonize Hall, comparable praise for data analysts can be heard in Texas, Wisconsin, Idaho, and Ohio. Although the scope of this report did not allow for a thorough review of pre- and post-database campaign finance coverage in all states, the reporters and editors with whom I spoke invariably attributed increasing state-level campaign finance coverage to Piper database projects. On the weekend that I arrived in Idaho, the *Idaho Statesman* issued its annual supplement on the "Idaho Legislature 2000." For the first time, the profiles of individual legislators included campaign finance data that bore a striking resemblance to the United Vision for Idaho's (UVI's) Legislative Accountability Profiles (LAP) format.

States with more limited staff are not able to provide the care and feeding of the Fourth Estate necessary to allow reporters to quickly incorporate a money and politics angle in their day-to-day reporting. Yet, even with limited staff, the West Virginia People's Election Reform Coalition (WV PERC)) has been able to establish a cooperative relationship with the *Charleston Gazette*. The *Gazette* has not only heavily relied on analysis of WV PERC's database in press coverage, but also its editorial board has issued editorials that could have been penned by the most articulate reform advocate.

Access to the newsroom and editorial boards, the enhanced reputation of the organization operating the database projects, and the depth and consistency of coverage speak to the success of Piper's database projects. Nonetheless, there are many challenges confronting the reform community, and there are lessons to be learned by states that are several steps behind the trailblazers that were visited.

The 1998 legislative session, which mercifully ends Saturday, has been a case study in the need for campaign finance reform. Bill after bill that would have benefited ordinary people was buried, while bills pushed by cash-giving special interests steamrolled over even concerted populist opposition. . . . This is not how a democracy is supposed to operate. The voice of the people is supposed to prevail, not the weight of the fattest wallet.

— **\$\$\$\$ Money Talks at Legislature editorial citing**



In questioning a decision by the governor's administration benefiting the coal industry, the editorial board of the *Charleston Gazette* stated:

a recent article by investigative reporter Paul Nyden adds another reason [for this decision]: Coal owners donated more than \$500,000 to Underwood's campaign and inaugural ceremony (Thanks to the West Virginia-People's Election Reform Coalition for gathering the raw data Nyden has been analyzing.) . . . The Caperton administration was fighting to make them [coal companies] responsible for Workers' Comp premiums . . . Chances are that Underwood and his administration would have abetted the coal industry even without the donations. But voters will never know for sure, will they?"

Lessons Learned and New Challenges for Piper Fund Databases

"Unveil the data, and they will come" appears to be the philosophy of several database projects. In contrast, those database projects that have convinced reporters to incorporate a campaign finance analysis into their regular coverage have spent time nurturing these relationships — not simply by getting information into a reporter's hands but by establishing a level of confidence and comfort.

Such a task requires continuous effort. In states such as Idaho, where the dominant newspaper is part of the Gannett chain, there is high turnover among reporters and editors as they move up and out of Boise. Even in Ohio, which has a highly competitive newspaper community, coverage has been limited to that by a few reporters who have developed data manipulation and political reporting as an expertise.

To overcome these problems and cultivate a broader pool of receptive and skilled reporters, Ohio Citizen Action (OCA) has taken a number of steps. Its database can not only be accessed on the web, but a compact disc containing the data in several formats is mailed to media outlets and individual reporters to allow more sophisticated searches. OCA has also helped lead workshops with Investigative Reporters and Editors/National Institute for Computer Assisted Reporting (IRE/NICAR), to train media personnel in conducting searches and providing blueprints for potential stories.³ Taking it one step further, OCA has conducted in-house training at the *Columbus Dispatch*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *Akron Beacon Journal*, *Dayton Daily News*, and *Cincinnati Post*.

Getting beyond newspapers with bureaus in the state capitol presents a difficult challenge. West Virginia's experience provides a lesson on the amount of resources that must be devoted and the inherent limitations of working with local newspapers. With the help of Common Cause, WV PERC compiled mini-reports for each senatorial district and sent the tailored reports to smaller newspapers in these districts with the aspiration of raising the issue of money and politics beyond Charleston. Although certain editors expressed an interest, WV PERC "saw no evidence of any of the data being printed in the smaller papers." With no prior relationship established with these papers, text-heavy releases containing no graphics, and staff rarely calling to follow up, the expenditure of limited organizational resources yielded no payoff. Even in states that have addressed these concerns, small local papers often are reluctant to question the practices of leading members of their community and spend little time covering state public affairs.

One of the first things I was told when I came to Raleigh was, "You can vote any way you want to up here because the folks back home will never know."
— Carolyn Russell, a state representative from Goldsboro, North Carolina

When reaching beyond the capitol press corps, reformers have had the greatest success in cultivating interest in mid-sized dailies. Although Mike McCabe noted that the coverage "ebbs and flows" as local issues prompt renewed interest, the *Racine Journal Times* and *Kenosha News*

³ Extensive information on the IRE/NICAR sessions can be found on their web site, which also contains a searchable database of federal, state, and local campaign finance stories that provides a windfall for story ideas. See <http://www.campaignfinance.org/searchstories.html>. The Radio-Television News Director Association has also produced *Follow the Money: Covering Campaign Finance* as a resource for journalists that can be found on the web at <http://www.rtndf.org/prodev/beats/pcmanuel.htm>.

have regularly carried the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's (WDC's) reports and requested individualized research. WDC found that many of the reporters with these papers begin a relationship with WDC after visiting the on-line database on their web site and conducting some initial research. WDC staff also visit these newspaper offices to establish personal relationships as they travel around the state. According to Gail Shea, "This has paid off handsomely. When we started to send out press releases, they knew who we were and what to expect from us. We also aggressively encouraged them to do reports on major contributors in their stories . . . and the editors love them. It seems that lists of local names in the papers get read. Finally, we are prepared to do local tags with all of our releases — these usually involve more specific information on the legislators in their area."⁴

To expand its outreach, Laura Yeomans of OCA writes a weekly column in 10 mid-sized newspapers with periodic pick-up from approximately 15 additional papers. Wisconsin Citizen Action (WCA) has set up all 35 state daily papers, many radio stations, and all television stations on their "blast-fax" system.

Television and radio coverage has also proved to be a challenge, because the electronic media devotes minimal time to coverage of public policy. Even when receptive television reporters are identified, they face serious constraints. According to Jon Hanian at KBCI-TV in Boise, "We should do more but news directors are skeptical that these stories can be cut to interest viewers. Unless dynamic visuals can be provided, it is difficult to get authorization to devote the production values necessary."



Most of our partners have therefore been confined to coverage when they were conducting a rally, protests outside of a fundraiser, and other events that convey outrage but minimal depth of analysis. Apart from what airs on public television, independent investigative reporting is sporadic at best. Data, therefore, needs to be predigested and translated into a format conducive to coverage in a visual medium. For example, WV PERC got extensive coverage of a report on contributions from the gambling industry by illustrating it with an eye-catching giant map showing the influx of gambling money to legislators in all the counties.

The radio medium has been more receptive, but few have tapped its potential. There are two primary methods that have allowed access to radio listeners — talk radio and radio actualities. Although the audience has declined for talk radio, it continues to provide an opening to segments of the population that have been difficult to engage. Republicans are almost twice as likely as Democrats to listen to talk radio, with the most loyal listeners consisting of men between the ages of 30 and 49. Religious radio shows have particular appeal for women and African Americans: 67% of those who listen regularly are women; 32% are African American.⁵

Talk radio has been a receptive audience when relations have been nurtured, but cultivating such relationships is time consuming. In Idaho, UVI's Jim Hansen is showcased weekly for a brief appearance on a talk radio show on KIDO during the morning commute in Boise. KIDO, which the show's host refers to humorously as KGOP (the morning show is followed by Rush

⁴ Reflecting their decision to concentrate on systemic problems with the campaign finance system and reluctance to spotlight individual politicians, the Massachusetts Money and Politics Project chose to restrain coverage in local newspapers. According to George Pillsbury, "we take some care with local dailies because we don't want to arbitrarily feed their hunger to dig up dirt on local reps."

⁵ See Pew Research Center Biennial News Consumption Survey at <http://www.people-press.org/med98rpt.htm>.

Limbaugh), provides an entry point to a constituency that UVI does not typically engage. The relationship with KIDO has led to appearances on live call-in shows during the legislative session and analysis of election returns on primary and general election nights. UVI has also worked with the Northern Rockies News Service to distribute radio actualities — short scripts for inclusion in radio programs with an audio feed available containing pre-recorded quotes. In 1999, 18 stories were distributed containing a campaign finance reform theme with 331 hits.⁶ The format is limited to a concise message with a single data fact.

The Media as Ally

The media has turned out to be more than a target. In several cases, it is an ally or partner. A number of state projects receive modest supplemental funding or in-kind contributions to help underwrite the costs of their databases. In Massachusetts, the *Boston Globe* provides approximately \$5,000 annually toward database costs in return for an exclusive first-use agreement, and WBZ-TV provided two interns for three months to research two investigative pieces on the house speaker and insurance committee chair. In North Carolina, the *Charlotte Observer* used an in-house polling firm to ascertain the occupations of particular donors. In West Virginia, the *Charleston Gazette* paid approximately \$4,000 to cover the costs of copying campaign records at the secretary of state's office in return for a copy of the database.

Scandal in North Carolina — Installment One

A major breakthrough in North Carolina fell into Bob Hall's hands because of the close relations he had developed with the press. A reporter at the *Wilmington Star* called Bob with a tip. Democracy South had previously issued a release documenting the campaign contributions to Governor Hunt from individuals who were appointed to the board of transportation. When J.A. Cartrette saw that the average cost of a seat was \$11,000, he was furious. He had contributed a much larger amount in response to direct solicitations from Governor Hunt's campaign and was not provided his "promised" appointment. Cartrette complained to the reporter, who immediately called Bob to track down documentation because he could not travel to Raleigh to do research. Hall confirmed the amount and dates of the contributions and tracked down a letter Cartrette had sent to the governor referencing his expectations. The resulting scandal became a major impetus for Hunt to adopt a pro-reform stance and built momentum for the issue.

To stretch its limited funding, North Carolina developed collaborative investigative projects with the *Independent Weekly*, an alternative newspaper in the Raleigh–Durham area. It issued in-depth series on the nursing home industry, the pollution lobby, and the board of transportation, and other smaller pieces where Democracy South would "crunch the numbers." To increase coverage among the mainstream papers that viewed the *Weekly* as both a competitor and a "lowly" alternative paper, they began issuing a separate press release on the date the *Independent* hit the newsstands. According to Bob Hall, "it is unclear whether we could have gotten more coverage by releasing it to the mainstream press, but we did not have the capacity to do this depth of reporting on our own." At this stage of development, exclusive work with the *Independent* is limited to situations in which the paper is willing to invest a sizable amount, but for many years it significantly augmented the reform community's capacity.

⁶ "Hits" represent the number of stations using a story. This number is conservative because it does not count the multiple times a story is played, nor does it capture the stations that use the script without calling for the audio feed.

Can the Piper Fund Enhance Media Work in the States?

The impressive success of several states is not reflective of the experience in others. Success is often a question of priorities and resources. In Georgia, Project South has focused its energy on outreach to low-income African American communities and has perceived little value in using the media as a tool. In West Virginia, and probably in many other states where Piper has seeded funding for new projects, resources have not been sufficient to hire full-time staff. Without sufficient staffing, database projects are not able to develop and nurture relationships with reporters and editors and cannot meet the individual reporters' requests for data analysis within the time parameters of their deadlines.

Exposing the scandals that continue to document the flaws in our democratic system and to propel the reform agenda requires staff who live with the data, who sort and resort them to find the patterns and oddities. In the Center for Responsive Politics's *Follow the Money Handbook*, Larry Makinson refers to the importance of the "process of osmosis." In his tip sheet, Bob Hall speaks of letting the data talk to you. Inadequate staffing has typically meant that projects can produce a few stock reports but are constrained from proactively developing analyses in response to situations arising in the state or in developing stories to pitch to others.

During its deliberations and proposal review, it is important that the Piper Fund evaluate whether a project can achieve its goals with anticipated resources and staffing. If not, the strategic plan needs to be adjusted, or new resources have to be identified. Piper may also wish to explore how it can bolster projects with more limited resources or skills and serve as a catalyst among the other resource providers in this field.

Projects with more limited media experience could greatly benefit from skills development. There are significant paper resources already available. As an example, I have transcribed a one-page tip sheet that Bob Hall developed for Democracy South that should be posted above the desk of every researcher. Although those with more experience may perceive the tips as being self-evident, many releases and reports have ended up with no coverage because of a failure to adhere to these recommendations. The Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) has produced a thick binder filled with information for its workshops and a valuable web site previously cited.³ A number of database project staff also speak very highly of the Strategic Press Information Network (SPIN) media workshops they have attended.⁷

Resources are of value only if project staff has the time and impetus to absorb and implement the techniques and lessons. For this reason, those with a grander vision have proposed a mentorship program with trainers assigned on-site for a week in the database project's office and a continuing series of phone consultations and check-ups. More limited scenarios could be envisioned. Public Campaign might consider including workshops during its 2001 national gathering. The regional support centers may include training in their technical assistance program. As the National Institute on Money in State Politics (NIMSP) matures, it may develop the potential to serve a function comparable to that of the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative (SFAI). With the SFAI network, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities and other national policy analysts produce national reports that contain state-level data and can be jointly released with

⁷ The SPIN Project has offered tailored workshops at regional gatherings, and Oregon and Wisconsin staff have attended the SPIN Media Academy. SPIN is about to release a new media guide and has a limited set of resources on its web site. <http://www.independentmedia.org/spin/index.html>.

their state-based fiscal policy projects, which allows states to piggyback on the time and expertise of the Center's staff. Public Campaign's *Color of Money* report was used in a comparable fashion, and many of the states found it to be very rewarding.

A low-cost tactic that would benefit the full array of groups would be for Piper or any of the resource centers to promote greater cross-fertilization among the database projects. Awareness of the accomplishments and failures of other state data analysis projects is very limited. When the American Friends Service Committee in Ohio was preparing a report on contributions to

The Value of Legislator Accountability Profile Reports (LAP)

One questionable example of cross-fertilization is the LAP book. LAP books are often the first reports undertaken by database projects.

The standard LAP book contains individual profiles of legislators and, in certain instances, statewide officeholders. The profiles consist of tables and graphs portraying the politician's campaign contributions by economic sector and a listing of the top five to ten contributors. They may also include information on committee assignment, a comparison of contributions and expenditures from the prior election cycle for the legislator and his opponent(s), and quotes should the candidate have articulated an opinion on the campaign finance system and the need for reform.

LAP books often exceed 100 pages in length and require a significant expenditure of staff time. Is this justified by the impact? It has been argued that the LAP book is necessary to establish a project's credentials or credibility. The states that have not pursued this model, however, appear to have achieved the same, if not greater, recognition and reliance among the media, the political establishment, and nonprofit advocates.

The amount of press generated from release of a LAP book is minimal and constrained to the release date. As Bob Hall advises in the tip sheet that follows: "Neither the media, nor the public, nor your own constituency can absorb large chunks of data. The press especially will focus on one story line or theme, and the rest of your research will get lost." In most instances, the story line is well known — there is a lot of money from special interests in the campaign finance system — and does not advance a reform agenda. Where a more sophisticated analysis is contained in the report, it often receives minimal attention.

Coalition members and other advocates within the state will periodically refer to a LAP book in identifying potential legislative allies or determining which committee assignment to seek. Unfortunately, the time lag between getting campaign finance reports after an election cycle and producing a polished report often lead to publication after the end of the first legislative session. Those instances where specific examples could be verified were scarce.

supreme court justices, they were unaware of prior studies in Texas. Circulating annotated lists or copies of reports and press releases to colleagues in other states would be valuable. IRE has found that articles written by its fellow reporters can prompt comparable work in other states. IRE colleagues have also written one- to two-page tip sheets on their experiences in developing story ideas, which detail the successes and pitfalls encountered. Whether Piper, NIMSP, or others develop this capacity, a regular exchange of reports, releases, articles, and critiques could encourage replication, experimentation, and a more vibrant dialogue in the reform community.

Tips for Report Writing and Research

Democracy South - Bob Hall

Start with the headline. Think about the story line or message you're trying to convey and boil it down to a headline you'd like to see in a newspaper. If it doesn't fit, then you're trying to do too much in one report.

Keep testing and refining your message as you write your report and continue your research. There's a dialectic between headline and data (hypothesis and research). One method: Write and edit your press release and your report at the same time, letting them evolve together, inform each other.

Do many small reports rather than one large report. Neither the media, nor the public, nor your own constituency can absorb large chunks of data. The press especially will focus on one story line or theme, and the rest of your research will get lost. Example: Instead of one report on the high costs of state legislative elections, the top sources of money, and fundraising success of incumbents – do three different reports.

Double check, triple check your data and analysis. Your credibility rests on your accuracy. As an advocate for reform, you're suspect because your bias is apparent. Consistent truth-telling is the foundation of a positive relationship with the media, legislators, the public, even your opponents.

Let the data talk to you. Spend the time browsing through the database to spot curious oddities or patterns. Sort the database by contributor/family name, by date each candidate received money (useful to spot bundling), by amount candidate received from each donor, by city, by employer, by committee, etc.

Think visuals. Charts, maps, tables help everybody if they are readily understandable. Name people and concrete situations, describe fundraising events, identify the beneficiaries – and the victims – of special favors; personalize, humanize the story. Think of what the TV camera or the mind's eye can focus on. Use comparisons that resonate: price of milk, average annual wage; rank things top to bottom, compare states, zip codes, years, government programs, winners/losers, etc.

Study your liabilities. Targeting private donors opens you to more legal liabilities than challenging public figures. Providing a list of every recipient of an interest group is more likely to contain a mistake than just listing the top 10 recipients. Err on the side of caution when combining donors into one family.

Connect the dots. Tie legislative votes to donations received, or other behavior to money. Connect the data findings to loopholes, policy weaknesses, and your recommendations. Push to expose the quid pro quo – the return on investment and what donors get for their help.

Focus on the money suppliers, not just the users. It's easy to bash politicians – but does that help your cause, or does it just reinforce reactionary anti-government, anti-social tendencies. Target the donors, make them feel the heat. Your research and organizing is part of a larger movement to promote people-power over the power of irresponsible corporations and privileged wealth.

Challenge yourself about the uses of your work. Don't think about mass media uses. Focus on producing tools with and for on-going constituency-education program. What are the tactical and strategic uses of the report? How does it enhance empowerment, not encourage cynicism? Who wants to know?

Accountability: Ensuring Compliance and Closing Loopholes

In designing this evaluation, several individuals set forth a base test for the database projects. Are they able to hold politicians accountable to the existing framework of campaign finance laws and regulations? In an ideal world, such an enforcement role should be played by the state administrative agency with oversight of campaign finance reports. Unfortunately, these agencies consistently lack the resources and often the political will to subject reports to vigorous evaluation and enforcement. Even in those states with vigilant state agencies, the database projects have demonstrated their value in both enhancing enforcement and expanding the scope of the established system to accommodate changes in campaign finance practices that fit within the accepted design, if not the letter, of the laws.

There are many examples in which data projects forced enhanced oversight of campaign reports. Kevin Kennedy of the Wisconsin State Elections Board acknowledged that WDC tips and reports "have forced us to address issues our audits did not uncover." Identifying individual cases for enforcement compels more vigorous agency enforcement, but state partners have also used their oversight to achieve systemic change.

OCA has issued an annual report card grading candidates on their campaign finance disclosure reports and on whether they identified the employer or occupation of contributors. In response to the press attention generated by these releases, the percentage of Ohio contributors properly identified rose to 95%. Although political parties are not required by Ohio law to disclose employers or occupations, they have voluntarily done so in response to the report card on parties' disclosure practices. OCA also shamed the secretary of state's office into following through on promises to provide electronic access to campaign finance reports after OCA launched its highly lauded campaign finance web site.

For less than \$200,000, a citizens group has done in a few quick months what Secretary of State Bob Taft did not achieve over eight years: Provide quick, easy access to lists of those who donate to statewide candidates.

— **Sandy Theis, Cleveland Enquirer**

WV PERC found that Governor Underwood's reports were highly deficient. The state oversight office, with a meager one and a half staffpersons, had failed to note that the original report did not include business affiliations of major contributors or dates when contributions were made. As a result of WV PERC's release, the governor was required to resubmit a complete report and was chastised by the media. WV PERC also documented several loopholes that were used to evade the state's contribution limits. For example, a \$50,000 loan issued by a campaign donor to one gubernatorial candidate in the final weeks of her campaign was never repaid. Governor Underwood raised more than \$1 million, a quarter of a million dollars from the coal industry alone, for his inaugural, in contributions far exceeding established campaign limits. With unprecedented speed, the legislature passed legislation closing these loopholes. Inaugural donations are now capped at \$5,000, and loans are allowed only from a candidate's spouse and official lending institutions.

People's Election Reform Coalition and West Virginia Citizen Action Group worked hard to propose these reforms and lobby for them. They also compiled computer databases of political contributions in 1996 and 1998. Clearly PERC deserves praise for helping pass the new law.

— **Charleston Gazette editorial, April 12, 1999**

Scandal in North Carolina — Installment Two

The scandal sparked by J.A. Cartrette's claim that he was promised a seat on the board of transportation in exchange for campaign contributions led to a series of related investigations and major reforms. Two board members who contributed to Governor Hunt's reelection campaign resigned after disclosures that they had conflicts of interest in approving road projects in their areas. Governor Hunt allocated \$100,000 in new funding to the North Carolina Board of Ethics and gave it investigative powers so that it could pre-screen all board and commission nominations.

The state department of transportation was also reorganized and adopted many of the policies promoted by the transportation reform community. Prior to the reforms, the division of rails and public transportation had limited staff and was dependent on the division of highways for budgeting, planning, and environmental impact assessments. As part of the reforms, a separate planning and environmental department with its own budget and staff was established. The former head of the public transportation division was promoted to head the entire department, and local governments were given more power by providing a renewed level of independence for the metropolitan planning organizations.

The North Carolina database has also been aggressively used to identify and close major loopholes in the campaign finance system. Examples of large-scale bundling that went unnoticed because contributors' employers or occupations were not disclosed helped build pressure for a new law requiring economic interest disclosure of donors of more than \$100. As the result of testimony by Democracy South in a board of elections hearing, in which it detailed research on soft money corporate donations solicited by North Carolina politicians and routed through national parties before returning to North Carolina, a new ruling banned this practice. Finally, continuous research and hammering on the "issue ad" abuses of Farmers for Fairness led to passage of laws to distinguish legitimate issue ads from electioneering by establishing a "reasonable person" test.

Electronic Filing and Disclosure

Database projects have been particularly important in accelerating the march toward electronic filing and disclosure of campaign finance reports. Such "open government" reforms are nonpartisan on the surface and have benefited from vigorous leadership across the aisle in many states. The victories, however, were not easily won. Behind the scenes, politicians worked to derail proposed reforms, and vigorous complaints were heralded that smaller, less sophisticated campaigns would be gravely injured.⁸

Passage of electronic filing and disclosure legislation has not been a panacea. Although lauding their electronic systems, states have failed to include critical elements such as the capacity to download, sort, or search data; requirements for timely reporting at the end of an election cycle (allowing major donations to slip by radar); and the ability to identify donors' occupations or employers. In Texas, the attorney general recently ruled that the state agency is precluded from

⁸ In most states exceptions are included in legislation for campaigns raising less than a specified amount to address this concern. As an aside, the Texas reform community scored a press hit when they had one of their leader's elementary school daughters enter campaign finance data into a computer set up on the capitol steps as a way to rebut arguments that electronic filing was too complex for campaign committees.

making the addresses of donors available by any electronic means, including computer diskette. This ruling was made despite the fact that the addresses remain available in the paper records and the Federal Election Commission has provided such access for federal campaign reports with no serious problems. Because such data is critical for identifying donors, this ruling seriously weakens the value of legislation recently passed in the state. The Center for Governmental Studies also found that "It is not altogether uncommon for a legislative body to approve legislation calling for development and implementation of electronic reporting, but then neglect to fund the program."⁹

Even with reports accessible from the state agency in a database format, data projects must expend countless hours to "clean and fingerprint" the contributors. For example, John H. Jeffords, J.H. Jeffords, John T. Jeffords, and Jack Jeffords may be the same or different donors, so supplemental research must be conducted and an individual contributor code assigned in order to ensure consistency in data runs. In addition to "cleaning" the data to ensure consistency, the contributors must be "fingerprinted" to include their occupation and employer, an identification of other non-income-earning family members who may have contributed, and an assessment of any ideologically based contributions.

Although state-mandated electronic filing and disclosure cannot replace the data projects operated by Piper's state partners, if well-designed, it can expand access to campaign finance records and reduce the costs of data entry for partners and others subjecting the data to enhanced scrutiny. The prevalent paper filings or voluntary electronic filing systems, in which fewer than a third of all candidates and committees participate, present a more daunting challenge. "In the 1998 election cycle, for instance, Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson filed a 1,834-page paper campaign report with state election officials, a report that costs roughly \$100 for a citizen to get a copy."⁹ Project South spends hours downloading scanned images of campaign reports to be sent to NIMSP for data entry, because the scanned data cannot be directly downloaded into a statistical program.

The database projects have proved to be invaluable in correcting this situation by producing a steady stream of media coverage, demonstrating the viability of proposed reforms, and maintaining vigilant oversight of legislation and implementation. The relationships they have developed with the media in their states and the self-interest of the major newspapers have also led to vital lobbying partnerships. Database projects have also often provided valuable advice to state agencies. In Ohio, the secretary of state's office has sought Laura Yeoman's guidance in designing its new site. The West Virginia secretary of state has regularly sent a representative to meetings of the campaign finance reform coalition and agreed to voluntarily make 2000 election cycle reports available on the Internet after WV PERC provided the office with a copy of its database.

Ohio Citizen Action kicked our butts by showing that translating campaign reports into an electronic report could provide comprehensive useful information and easy navigation while being done inexpensively.

— **Margaret Rolf, Ohio Secretary of State's
Legislative Liaison**

⁹ Craig Holman and Robert Stern at the Center for Governmental Studies issued a report on the state of electronic filing and disclosure entitled *Access Delayed is Access Denied: Electronic Reporting of Campaign Finance Activity*. The California Voter Foundation also conducted a survey of all 50 states electronic filing and Internet access to campaign finance records. The survey can be found at www.digitalsunlight.org/awards.

Designing and Evaluating a Reform Agenda

If maintained over multiple election cycles, campaign finance databases provide a useful tool for those designing or evaluating reform options. Many of the database projects are just reaching the point where they have adequate information to provide insights. The Piper grantmaking strategy affirms that the "patchwork of reforms and flurry of activity (at the state level) represent a virtual laboratory where different reform approaches can be tested, compared, and evaluated." Without careful analysis to track the flow of money in our political system and its impact on the vibrancy of electoral competition and civic engagement, any evaluation or comparison is of limited significance. A few studies of contribution patterns before and after a reform was implemented exhibit the potential for database projects to sharpen critiques and for working jointly with the academic community.

OCA has worked closely with John Green at the University of Akron's Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics. Dr. Green has recently completed two studies relying on the Ohio Citizen Policy Center's campaign finance database. *The Impact of the 1995 Ohio Campaign Finance Reforms: An Analysis of the Patterns of Donations and Donors* assesses the impact of the 1995 Ohio campaign finance reforms on donation patterns and donor composition in the 1998 election, using the 1994 elections as a baseline. The 1995 reforms set \$5,000 individual contribution limits. The study documented that the reforms "changed the pattern of donations, reducing the size of donations, dispersing donations to more candidates, and channeling more donations through state party committees. However, these changes did not markedly alter the level of electoral competition, the underlying source of funds, nor the distribution of donors." The report did document that party donations were critical for candidates in close races and for those who lost with less than 40% of the vote.

The Next Steps: Options for Campaign Finance Reform in Ohio sets forth a modest series of recommendations building on the goals of the 1995 law limiting the size of contributions and channeling donations through political parties. In designing and preparing justifications for a series of future reforms, OCA and the Bliss Institute have used the database to calculate the cost of alternative partial public financing programs, to determine threshold amounts necessary to ensure competitive races in varied districts, and to measure the impact of the \$50 existing tax credit.¹⁰ Although the reform community disagrees over the proposed reform agenda, the data analysis provides a solid foundation for critiquing both the existing system and alternative remedies.

¹⁰ Academics in a number of other states have relied on the databases for their research. For example, Ted Arrington, the chair of the political science department at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, has prepared regression analyses for an upcoming article and for a lawsuit brought by the National Voting Rights Institute and former Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court Jim Exum. Anthony Corrado, Associate Professor of Government at Colby College, also produced an analysis that served as a counter-weight to expert testimony provided by plaintiffs challenging the contribution and spending limits set in Maine's public financing initiative.

Another academic who deserves acknowledgment is Kenneth R. Mayer, at the University of Wisconsin Department of Political Science. He refers to the Wisconsin Cooperative Campaign Finance Database "three times a week" and has produced two reports that have been referenced in the reform debate in Wisconsin: *Issue Advocacy in Wisconsin: Analysis of the 1998 Elections*, and *Proposal for Enhanced Disclosure and Public Financing and Electoral Competition in Minnesota*. (In his comparison of Minnesota and Wisconsin, Mayer asserts that data show that public financing can succeed in the critical task of fostering competitive elections.) Craig Holman and Bob Stern at the Center for Governmental Studies have also done numerous reports and individualized analyses for state advocates, legal defense of reforms, and the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws.

Several years before NIMSP was launched, Sam Sanchez prepared an analysis of Washington's Ballot Measure 9 that lowered contribution limits and banned transfers between candidates. In the study, *Washington Politics: A Comparison of the 1990, 1992, 1994, and 1996 Elections*, she compared two elections cycles that predated the reforms and two cycles conducted under the limits. The study provides an intriguing critique of low contribution limits. Although the average size of contributions was cut and the number of contributors more than doubled, independent expenditures, personal contributions by candidates to their own campaigns, and transfers from political parties increased dramatically. Those who contributed more than \$1,000 continued to supply more than 60% of the total funds raised after the reform was implemented. Although business interests were not significantly affected by the reforms, labor contributions dropped by 43% in 1994 and remained 13% below the pre-reform level in 1996.

Debates in the reform community can be greatly enriched as more in-depth analysis occurs. No single study is irrefutable, nor should the policy prescriptions offered be blindly accepted simply because a regression analysis is employed or the analysts have academic credentials. Nor can we expect, however, that a comprehensive reform agenda will be widely accepted without appropriate documentation of its impact in an environment that has shown an impressive ability to mutate in unexpected ways.

Building a Base for Comprehensive Reform

As the Piper Fund was launched, it set forth an ambitious goal of supporting innovative and comprehensive campaign finance reform at the state and local levels. As has been demonstrated in the preceding pages, database projects have been a powerful tool that have allowed Piper grant recipients to engage the media, invigorate the enforcement of existing laws, close loopholes, and aid in the design and evaluation of reform proposals. The data have kept pressure on policymakers, but they have not led to mass endorsements of the comprehensive reform agendas proposed. Although officeholders often acknowledge problems in the current campaign finance system, they have demonstrated the ability to overcome its hurdles and are reluctant to embrace reform options that may have unintended consequences, such as strengthening the campaigns of their future challengers.

Each state reform community confronts its own terrain, but no state partners have the numbers or the political influence to move a comprehensive reform agenda without others. How vital a role can data compilation and analysis projects play in what is essentially an organizing and coalition-building challenge? Examples where data have been consciously and aggressively incorporated into a base-building effort are limited. The experimentation that has occurred, however, suggests some avenues that may be worthy of pursuit.

Grassroots Outreach

Massachusetts offers the primary example of a campaign in which data was used to reach out to the grassroots. The Massachusetts Money and Politics Project incorporated data in a series of workshops designed to mobilize a base of volunteers. In the years leading up to Ballot Question 2, George Pillsbury and his colleagues held 45-minute workshops in counties across the state, to 7–15 people at a time. The popular education approach boiled their research down into a number of charts and graphics designed with the assistance of a cartoonist. The flip charts graphically displayed the rising cost of campaigns in Massachusetts; the amount legislators must raise per

week; the dominant role played by large donors; a bundling example resulting in a tax break for EMC, Raytheon, and other large manufacturers; and comparative information on the proposed "Clean Money" system. Although it had produced a number of extensive reports for other audiences, the condensed data provided a critique of the existing system sufficient to activate 400 leaders. These individuals served as the backbone of the county-level campaign structure for the local advisory initiatives in 1996 and the state ballot initiative in 1998. None of the six sites where interviews were conducted have engaged in as systematic an outreach program in communities. Of course, none of the sites benefit from an impending initiative with a date certain to motivate community members.

In Idaho, UVI sets up booths at county fairs. After spinning the Wheel of Fortune, each person who stops by the booth gets a card for a special interest highlighting "What They Gave" and "What They Got" (see Appendix B). They could also watch a video on the topic and sign postcards to the governor demanding reform. Because there is no campaign structure, the booths were primarily used to gauge public receptivity with no follow-up to the lists of names generated.

Georgia's Project South devotes its outreach to low-income African American communities. It has produced two editions of a LAP type report entitled *Who Owns Georgia Politics: The Impact of Private Money on Georgia Elections*, with a third edition containing 1996 data anticipated in May 2000. As is stated in the introduction, "This report is the product of a unique process of action research and popular education. Our process has two goals. The first is to develop a teaching tool that explains why our communities' needs are being ignored by our elected officials. The second is to develop indigenous researchers and educators who are able to use these skills and knowledge in their own communities to facilitate a deeper understanding of local issues and strengthen the process of making positive change."

During the site visit in Georgia, I met with five community members from Athens and Augusta who had participated in leadership cultivation programs. Although they gave a sharp critique of the imbalance in the political system and highly lauded their experiences, the discussion and examples arose from local work in communities with no reference to the state campaign finance data detailed in *Who Owns Georgia Politics?* It is not clear why the dense LAP format was chosen. Few individuals were engaged in writing and researching the report (nine including Project South staff), and there is no evidence that the report was relied on by others. Although a few facts were distilled from the report for use in a workshop that the Georgia Rural Urban Summit and Project South jointly offer, the LAP book format appears to have little value for the popular education program.

North Carolina has experimented with the use of tabloids. Rather than issue 100-page reports, North Carolina has disseminated its research in smaller releases or joint projects with journalists or state activists. To extend the reach of its work, it has gone beyond newspaper articles and community forums by intermittently sending a four-page tabloid printed in two colors on 14x22-inch sheets of high-quality newsprint to targeted constituencies. The tabloids are less expensive to print and present data and analysis in an engaging format. For example, 40,000 copies were sent out for a cost of approximately \$2,000 during North Carolina's Dealmakers Project. The tabloid's principal value has been as a broad public education tool.

In Wisconsin and Ohio, there have been larger public forums held to educate and engage the general public in a few locations, and individual profiles of legislators' campaign contributions

have been distributed through canvass operations. Although the community forums allowed a depth of conversation, Larry Marx at WCA found that "making the connection takes too long for the fast-food style of door-to-door canvassing."

Whether answering the door, stopping by a booth, or turning out for a community meeting or workshop, the concern expressed by citizens, although heartfelt, often has no vehicle for making a lasting impact. Unless a reform policy is prominently moving forward in the state and a strong field organizing staff is in place, it is difficult to convince community members to neglect all the competing demands on their time or to design vehicles to maintain contact with a dispersed constituency.

Organized Constituencies

Rather than attempt to build their own army of reformers, advocates have, therefore, concentrated their attention on constituencies that are already organized. Whether because of limited resources or a disconnection between the research and organizing staff, few states, however, have successfully integrated the data analysis work into their organizing. Those who have overcome these barriers have demonstrated that when data research is aggressively employed to serve organized constituencies on their bread and butter issues, these constituencies will incorporate campaign finance reform as a priority and can be enticed to commit resources to move a reform agenda forward.

Larry Marx at WCA has acknowledged the frustration of moving campaign finance reform and, at the same time, highlighted the critical role that data analysis can play: "Compared to issues like the economy, health care, education or the environment, campaign finance can seem abstract or even trivial, at best a secondary issue. . . . To unions, it will be a secondary issue to job security; to environmental organizations, it will be a secondary issue to clean air and water, etc. For campaign finance reform to gain significance in this context, it must become a powerful connector issue (showing how the public's economic and environmental interests are concretely harmed) and it must become a first-tier issue for a wider constituency. . . . Our experience is that when the connections can be demonstrated — that special-interest 'inputs' helped to produce 'policy' outputs that injure the public interest — citizen outrage on the primary issue is heightened greatly."

Some of the most interesting work has been with constituencies that have a limited presence at the state capitol. Insightful staff attentive to the agendas of a variety of constituencies in their state can identify unique points of opportunity and employ the database to graphically document the manner in which private campaign funding is derailing the policy initiatives of these constituencies. They can thereby politicize the targeted constituency's leadership (and, if provided access, the membership), furnish a powerful tool for the constituency's arsenal, and acquire new partners for the reform coalition.

For example, in Portland, Oregon, the Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) worked for two years to pass a low-income housing ordinance to preserve Section 8 housing. A wealthy real estate investor, having failed in his opposition to the city ordinance, sought to have the state legislature weaken the

I don't see myself as a researcher, but as an organizer. While money and politics research is a fundamental tool in a strategic arsenal, I do no more research than necessary. It is more important to translate the data into language people understand and can use.

— Moira Bowman, Oregon Money in Politics Research Action Project

provisions. As the *Willamette Week* noted, “If the bill becomes law, Schnitzer will have almost single-handedly reversed a key element of the city’s housing strategy.” Moira Bowman, a staff member of the Money in Politics Research Action Project, followed the battle and unearthed evidence of campaign finance contributions that Schnitzer had made and lobbying reports that documented his efforts. As they fought the state legislation, the tenants incorporated the data into their press releases, flyers, and newsletter, *Tenant Times*, and found them particularly helpful in their discussions with legislators who were wavering. Not only did the tenants preserve the policy, but the board, staff, and membership of CAT are now active participants in the Oregon campaign finance reform community.

Scandal in North Carolina – Installment Three

Transportation — The North Carolina transportation scandal referenced earlier has many facets. Cartrette's revelation of his contribution and anticipated political appointment was a pivotal chapter, but there was a long history of local groups working on this issue. Laura Deaton Klauke, the sole staff member of the North Carolina Alliance for Transportation Reform, provides the earlier chapter in our tale. Bob Hall approached her with his initial analysis of the campaign contributions by individuals appointed to the state board of transportation. "Bob documented what we knew intuitively. For local community members across the state who were fighting road projects, his data illustrated the power structure analysis without using the power structure rhetoric. For every road project, it seemed you could follow the money trail and identify a road as the 'Carolina Freight road' or the 'wood pallet factory road.' The public previously relied upon the 'expertise' of DOT to defend the status quo and would question the motives of community groups standing in the way of progress. The money and politics data chipped away at this legitimacy and finally led to massive reforms."

Hog Farms — Over the years, Bob Hall served on the board of the North Carolina Coastal Federation and has done individualized research on developers and major landowners in the coastal zone. As the waste pits ruptured and the stench from the feces of more than 10 million hogs drifted across communities, Bob was called on to prepare an analysis of the campaign contributions from the hog industry, owners of "factory" farms, and Farmers for Fairness (the industry's lobbying arm). As part of a public forum for the Alliance for Responsible Swine Industries, Bob presented his damning profile to the 400+ people in attendance, and extensive articles were included in a tabloid mailed to more than 100,000 voters in the affected counties. Further scandals were to be revealed, but this work amplified Democracy South's message throughout eastern North Carolina.

Nursing Homes — Immersed in the database on another day, Bob Hall's attention was drawn to a number of checks in large amounts delivered on the same day from people who had never appeared as major donors previously. Bob contacted Marleen Chasson at Friends of Residents in Long-Term Care, a small volunteer-based group, and they developed an investigation with the *Independent Weekly*. Further digging uncovered a number of bogus addresses for "donors," and Democracy South filed a complaint with the State Board of Elections.

The resulting investigation by the State Bureau of Investigations and a district attorney's office led to convictions of Stephen Pierce, the owner of the state's largest chain of nursing homes, who had illegally funneled campaign contributions exceeding the state limits through employees and relatives. Politicians including Governor Hunt and state Senator Beverly Perdue returned more than \$101,000 in illegal contributions.

Friends of Residents in Long-Term Care, which had previously seen its initiatives go down to defeat and a \$3.7 million no-strings-attached bonus for the nursing home industry mysteriously appear in the budget, had a new ally. Perdue, a candidate for lieutenant governor, fought for legislation requiring that the industry provide increased staffing. (She has also called for a public financing program.) Chasson and her board are now reliable proponents of campaign finance reform in the state.

Constituencies with lobbyists who have established relationships in state legislatures are more difficult to activate. Established lobbyists tend to be skeptical that any significant reform is likely to move forward in the near-term and to be concerned that working on campaign finance reform will imperil their relationships with elected officials. In her assessment of the inability to get unions on board, Laura Yeomans at OCA reflected, “Labor has manpower, money and political know-how. . . . They will not align themselves with efforts that have no money, few organizational skills, few legislative allies, no projections of costs, no projections of funding sources, and that in some cases restrict their (labor's) past electoral activity. Sometimes, campaign finance reform proposals fall into these categories. We need to improve our own preparation and analysis of our reform proposals to attract labor.”

When comprehensive reform proposals have demonstrated political viability, there are often references to labor’s acceptance and support of the reform agenda when confronted with campaign finance data analysis documenting the disparity between labor and business campaign contributions. The reality is less definitive.

One problem with activating labor is that it is not a unified entity. Each union is likely to approach a reform proposal from the perspective of its own policy agenda and strategy, leadership, and history of relationships within the state. One case in point may be Massachusetts: Although labor is outspent by business interests 8:1 for campaign contributions, the reform forces were not able to convince unions to commit any substantial resources during the initiative battle. According to George Pillsbury, “The data probably helped keep labor neutral. Eventually, in the last months of the campaign, the AFL-CIO state federation endorsed clean elections. The MTA (Massachusetts Teachers Association) continued to oppose but only behind the scenes and basically stayed out. AFSCME didn't like it but stayed out as well.”

In Connecticut and Wisconsin, which have a long history of cooperative work between the coalitions and labor and where campaign finance data has been used to fight legislative battles in labor’s self-interest, the coalitions were able to get some unions to contribute critical resources to campaigns advancing public financing proposals. Last year, the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority announced that it would award a waste treatment contract imperiling 140 union jobs to a private corporation, Manafort Brothers. The Connecticut Citizen Research Group identified more than \$19,000 in contributions from Manafort Brothers to Governor John G. Rowland’s 1998 campaign. As the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union mobilized to fight this battle, its campaign relied heavily on a money and politics analysis, and its rallying cry became “Something Stinks and It’s Not the Garbage.”

When major campaign finance legislation gained momentum early in 2000, AFSCME returned the favor. Based on a list of 35 legislators identified as being critical to the success of the reform

We know that labor is outspent 15:1 and that changing the campaign finance system is essential if we intend to get our own people elected to office. . . . A lot of constituency groups are afraid that they have to disarm if they sign on to a campaign finance reform agenda. AFSCME is not disarming but we will continue to play an active role to ensure that reforms are passed in the state.
— **Mindy Berman, AFSCME Political Director**

legislation, AFSCME targeted four districts in which it had membership and a prior relationship. Rank and file members activated the phone banks, turned out for rallies, and met with local legislators. The political director took an active role in the lobbying campaign, and AFSCME’s president testified at a critical hearing on the legislation.

In Wisconsin, labor, especially the United Auto Workers (UAW), made substantial contributions as WCA sought passage of the Impartial Justice bill, providing full public financing for judicial races. The UAW produced members from across the states for a hearing on the bill and for WCA's lobby day. The UAW political director also pressured Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Chvala to permit a vote on the bill at a critical juncture.

According to Roger Bybee, "While WCA has worked alongside labor in countless battles over the past 20 years (plant-closing legislation, health care, etc.), we added to our credibility among labor when we played a starring role in legislative hearings on 'paycheck protection' in Wisconsin in January 1998. At the hearing, we employed a huge graphic to demonstrate the 10:1 disparity between corporations and labor in campaign spending." This work and the scores of money and politics presentations WCA has made at labor conferences over the years has not erased all unions' concerns or hostility. For example, although the Wisconsin Education Association Council has agreed to support the Impartial Justice bill, it remains opposed to many reforms proposed for other statewide or legislative races.

WDC has systematically reached out to an unusual community — one that constitutes the associations representing every local elected official in the state. Although these groups have historically fought among themselves over the pool of funding provided by the state government for localities and have viewed campaign reform as a distraction, WDC issued the following joint statement in December, 1999:

Joint Statement on Campaign Finance Reform

League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin Alliance of Cities, Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Wisconsin Counties Association, and Wisconsin Towns Association
December 8, 1999

As local government associations, we are very different organizations with very different agendas, focusing on a wide spectrum of public policy issues ranging from local roads to statewide teacher licensure. Likewise our organizations have addressed campaign finance reform in very different ways and at varying levels. Some have felt it was not our place to comment on reform proposals, others have spoken in support of specific proposals.

Today we speak with one voice.

We have seen the political process in Wisconsin change in some very distressing ways. Campaign spending is spiraling out of control and special interests are playing an increasingly dominant role in financing elections. The most powerful special interests now enjoy disproportionate access to public officials at key times in the legislative process.

In contrast, our organizations do not dispense campaign contributions through political action committees. We do not donate "soft money" to out-of-state political committees that then bankroll campaign activities here in Wisconsin. We do not flood the airwaves with "issue ads" that only thinly veil the use of corporate money to influence the outcome of elections.

We believe that without campaign finance reforms that ensure public policy decisions will be determined on the merit of the issues, not on the size of special interest donations, the future of Wisconsin government is at risk. In today's pay-to-play environment, the voices of locally elected officials are diminished. Wisconsin's proud tradition of clean and open government has been badly tarnished and state lawmakers must work on a bipartisan basis to achieve comprehensive reform. . . .

Local elected officials were aware that their state allocations were shrinking and their agendas were being "trumped" by interests able to dispense campaign contributions. Yet, staff of the associations acknowledge that WDC played a critical role as a catalyst transforming awareness into action. WDC staff wrote newsletter articles, met with individuals and groups of elected officials, and documented campaign contributions by the localities' opponents where losses left them particularly embittered. For example:

- **Tavern Licensing Fees** — After tavern owners had contributed over \$77,000 between January 1996 and June of 1997, the state passed legislation allowing taverns to install video poker machines, preempting regulations by localities and establishing a \$10,000 license fee. The fee in essence was a subsidy for existing taverns that had paid \$500 for their license and could now pass on the \$10,000 when they sold their tavern.

Ed Huck, Executive Director of the Alliance of Cities, called the fee “a multimillion dollar giveaway to the tavern industry . . . (that) will make redevelopment more difficult in our cities.” The legislature, in his words, “hijacked a car that belongs to local governments, not a state car.”

Rich, you have good arguments but we have \$100,000 in our PAC.
— Lobbyist for Wisconsin Builders Association to Rich Eggleston of the Alliance of Cities

- **Start of School Year** — School boards unsuccessfully fought legislation mandating that all schools start September 1 or later. As Mike McCabe noted in WDC's article in the October issue of *Wisconsin School News*, the principal proponent of this measure, the tourism industry, spent \$500,000 in campaign contributions and \$1.5 million lobbying lawmakers.
- Gail Shea's WDC article in *Wisconsin Counties*, December 1999, called upon the county officials to take an active role in the call for reform. While the legislature wrestled with the budget, she noted that legislators raised over \$875,000 in the first six months of the year. At the same time, provisions appeared in the budget "making it more difficult for liquor distillers to switch distributors. Ashley Furniture and Anderson Windows received exemptions from DNR rules allowing them to expand onto adjacent wetlands. Waste haulers got a break on recycling costs at the expense of local governments."

As a result, the memberships of the various associations of elected officials are now driving the agenda, and new voices have joined the reform community. The Wisconsin Counties Association has gone further, announcing its intention to run advisory referenda calling for campaign finance reform on the November 2000 ballot in all 72 counties. Although some in the reform community criticize the vague language and value of the referendum and the role of a county commissioner who is considering a run for governor, the fact that these constituencies are engaged in the campaign finance debate speaks to the potential of aggressive outreach to new constituencies.

Who Should Have Access to Databases, and How Should They Be Used?

There are other examples demonstrating that the use of data analysis can result in successful campaign reform outreach. Yet, examples of missed opportunities exceed the success stories. Before evaluating the challenges confronting the reform community in using data analysis more aggressively, however, it is important to acknowledge that it is often not a question of how to use the data but whether it should be used. Currently, the reform community has not reached a consensus on who should have access to the data and when the data should be employed.

Unfortunately, conflicting strategies have not been openly debated in the reform community, and

it is often not clear which decisions have been made consciously and which approaches have been adopted simply in response to resource limitations.

In Idaho, one of UVI's board members, in discussing the limited use of the database, stated "There is horsepower under the hood that we don't know how to use." Models exist for learning techniques, and they could be disseminated where adequate staffing is in place. UVI, however, has relied upon a strategy similar to the one employed by the Massachusetts Money and Politics Project. There was a clear decision in Massachusetts to constrain use of the database. The project was "reluctant to spotlight individual legislators — preferring to keep the focus on the systemic problems of a bad campaign finance system (soon to get better)." The limited number of reports that were issued therefore maintained a focus on aggregate statistics used to underscore problems in the campaign finance system (e.g., growth in warchests, number of uncompetitive seats, advantage of incumbents, and profiles of the economic sectors contributing and their policy agendas). The database was maintained on computers in the project's office and reporters or advocates wishing to access the data do so only through the project staff.

In contrast, North Carolina and Texas have released a large number of reports and press releases highlighting both donors and recipients. Although the characterizations may differ materially, there are numerous examples, some previously cited, where individual officeholders are boldly identified in scandals and policy campaigns. The LAP books and canvass flyers used in several states are composed almost entirely of profiles of the individual officeholders and their primary contributors.

To what extent a particular database project chooses to brighten or dim the spotlight on individual officeholders may vary according to the stage of the debate within the state and the philosophy of the organization or coalition. In Texas, Craig McDonald has characterized Texans for Public Justice as bomb throwers removed from the intrigues of the legislature and from the new coalition being built to move a legislative agenda. Whereas other reformers are quick to distinguish themselves from Texans for Public Justice when appearing before a legislative committee, some will acknowledge that its incendiary actions have raised the profile of an issue and changed the debate in a state that still revels in its "wild west" atmosphere of campaign funding.

Perhaps the most aggressive example of using campaign data to pressure individual politicians is North Carolina's Dealmakers Project. Working closely with experienced legal counsel and building on a long history of questioning the impact of campaign contributions in the political system, Democracy South was able to target specific political leaders as a way to dramatize the need for serious campaign finance reform and to engage them in a debate on the issue. Both Democrats (state Senator Beverly Perdue and Governor Jim Hunt) and Republicans (U.S. Senator Lauch Faircloth) were targeted.

Senator for Sale

The title of a *Forbes* magazine article on Senator Lauch Faircloth contained the phrase "Senator for Sale," which served as the theme for this segment of the Dealmakers Project. As the McCain-Feingold legislation came forward for a crucial September vote in 1998, Democracy South turned the heat up on Senator Faircloth in an attempt to get him to shift his opposition to campaign finance reform.

Building on their intensive investigation of hog-industry political money, Democracy South worked with reporters covering Faircloth, who was in a heated battle with John Edwards for the Senate seat. They "took four superb examples of deals with special interests, delivered them with donor lists and documents as exclusives to specific reporters, and got three front-page stories in three major papers (which then went on the AP wire with follow-up editorial bounce). After two exclusives ran, we released our own report detailing 'a dozen dirty deals,' amplifying rather than pre-empting the earlier work of key reporters."

Besides their work with the media, Democracy South broadcast the message through (1) 40,000 copies of a four-page tabloid; (2) 40 billboards scattered throughout the state, on major highways; and (3) two weeks of one-minute radio ads in three major markets, aired on country-music/blue-collar stations.

Although Democracy South's effort focused exclusively on the campaign finance reform issue, not the elections, reporters and others commentators in the state assert that it played an important role in the upset victory of Democratic John Edwards (Edwards received 51% of the vote while Faircloth received 47%.)

A memo describing a number of lessons learned from the Dealmakers Project and highlighting the legal constraints is available from Democracy South.

Contrasting strategies for using databases go beyond whether the database projects shine their own spotlights on officeholders. There are also different approaches on providing access for others to conduct independent analyses. Some sites wish to ensure that the use of the database remains within their control. Others are either skeptical of the ability of other nonprofit organizations to conduct data analysis or do not have, or wish to allocate, staff time to train others on manipulating databases. Although North Carolina's project has pursued many cooperative research projects, it has been criticized by some in the reform community. As one reformer stated, "the problem is that grassroots groups are always constrained by Bob's time and priorities, since he doesn't teach people how to do research by themselves or provide them with access to the database."

The Wisconsin Cooperative Campaign Finance Database can be accessed with limited search capabilities directly through its web site. Because the WDC web site (as is the case with the state databases available through NIMSP) allows only rudimentary searches, WDC has surveyed other nonprofit organizations in the state to help prioritize their research projects and has offered to run data queries needed by others. Project South has also begun to open access to its database by offering to conduct research for others in the reform coalition. OCA mails its database on diskette to journalists in the state so that the data can be merged with other databases and sorted using multiple variables. The Texas Library on Money and Politics plans to provide broader access in Texas through a sophisticated search engine on its new web site by the end of the year. Such open access limits the ability to control the message being conveyed with the data, but it allows multiple voices (and approaches) to enter the reform debate.

Is Data Analysis Too Blunt An Instrument?

There are legitimate concerns about the use of databases. As Arizona, Maine, and Massachusetts have demonstrated, even states with the initiative process in place will depend on legislators, the governor, the attorney general, and other officeholders to ensure the integrity of a reform during the implementation stage. States that allow public policy to be set only through enactment of

legislation are forced to walk a longer and more treacherous tightrope between maintaining pressure on officeholders and nurturing relationships for critical votes.

In Wisconsin, open access to databases has allowed legislators on both sides of the aisle to question the motivations of their colleagues or opponents. Representative Mark Pocan, a first-term Democrat, researched the contributions from the board members of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance to strongly question its impartiality. Representative Scott Walker, a Republican from Wauwatosa, used the database to question the convictions of Senator Alice Clausing (D), a proponent of campaign finance reform, by documenting that a large percentage of her contributions came from outside her district.

In-district and out-of-district data analyses have shown that many legislators that were allies on other issues rose to the top of these critiques and received heavy criticism in the press. Legislators from districts composed primarily of low-income communities, those that are themselves from underrepresented communities, and legislative leaders are often highly dependent on contributors outside their districts. It is not surprising that when this kind of information is reported without caveat, relations with legislators can sour and that comparable analyses continue to remain at the bottom of the priority lists of more politically savvy projects.

Just as data analysis can instigate and assist reform, it can also fray coalitions, thereby impeding reform. For example, the WV PERC project documented a 216% increase in donations from gambling interests and sounded an alarm prior to the 1999 legislative session. When a bill was introduced to allow a county referendum on opening a casino at the Greenbrier Resort, WV PERC representatives held press conferences, briefed editorial boards, and testified with an eye-catching map showing the influx of money to legislators. Although WV PERC did not take a position on the legislation, its campaign finance analysis was highly lauded by the faith community. At the next annual state conference of the United Methodist Church (attended by approximately 1,700 people), WV PERC flyers were distributed, and a resolution calling for public financing of elections was passed. Although their assistance to the faith community was rewarded, WV PERC's labor allies had supported the gambling bill and disagreed vigorously with WV PERC. Thanks to a decade of trust-building, the disagreement did not weaken the multi-issue progressive coalition, but in a state without that history the result could have been less favorable.

No matter how carefully conducted and politely presented, officeholders do not appreciate the scrutiny that results from analysis of campaign contribution records. Some potential coalition partners will approach the work of the data analysis project with trepidation. Wisconsin provides several examples of what can be expected. WDC was approached by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) with an offer to fund two studies of campaign contributions from the nursing home and managed care industries. The Midwest regional director wanted to generate more attention for health care initiatives and strengthen the work of the state chapter that was staffed by volunteers. When the first report was issued, a ranking member of one of the committees was offended and called the AARP chapter to let it know that he would no longer meet with them. Although the regional director perceived this as bluster from someone who had never been a reliable vote in the past, the local volunteers were shaken, and the second report was tabled.

Elements of a coalition of interests seeking transportation reform exhibited the same timidity. When the Sierra Club and 1000 Friends of Wisconsin prepared to produce a report, "Pothole

Payback,” on the distorting impact of campaign contributions on transportation policy, other coalition members (senior citizens, people with disabilities, and conservation proponents) chose not to include their names. This reluctance to stand front and center did not reflect a disagreement with the analysis or even an unwillingness to support reform of the campaign finance system; the public release was simply outside of their comfort zone. They did, however, use the data in educating their members and referenced it in private meetings with legislators.¹¹

Conclusion and Recommendations

Democracy works only if the people have faith in those who govern, and that faith is bound to be shattered when high officials and their appointees engage in activities which arouse suspicions of malfeasance and corruption. — **Justice Souter in Nixon v. Shrink Missouri Government PAC quoting US v. Mississippi Valley Generating Company**

It is clear that campaign finance reform database projects play a critical role in our democracy. At the outset, I approached this evaluation with some concern that the releases and reports issued by these projects may simply feed the antipathy of citizens toward their political leaders and intensify civic disengagement. As a former lobbyist, I have used the bludgeon of campaign data to harshly paint the actions of specific politicians to force them to alter the role they are playing in a specific policy debate. Although effective in the short-term, these practices can be easily abused.

Concerns about using campaign data do not mean that databases should not be aggressively employed, only that they should be employed in a thoughtful manner. The truth-telling enabled by this resource has exposed many scandals in our political system that would otherwise never have been discovered, and it is likely that the threat of exposure afforded by this resource has prevented many other illegal or unethical practices. We have no choice but to bring these practices to light. The alternative is to allow abuses of the public trust to thrive in the shadows and to allow public policy to be distorted by the influence of campaign donations.

Concerns about using campaign data do speak to the importance of the ultimate goal of the database projects. Their impressive success at penetrating the media can be perceived only as a means. Holding politicians answerable to the existing laws and regulations, closing loopholes, and expanding access to and speed of disclosure are valuable in stopping blatant abuses of the public trust by ensuring a base level of accountability in our political system. The Piper Fund and its grant recipients share a common perception, however, that the system itself is critically flawed, and they share a common goal of enacting comprehensive reform. The ultimate justification for the data projects is their ability to advance this agenda. Although there may be disagreements on the definition of comprehensive reform, databases have shown the ability to build the base of support critical for the advancement of a reform agenda.

¹¹ The Sierra Club and Wisconsin Environmental Decade spoke glowingly of the Wisconsin Cooperative Campaign Finance Database. They had previously done cursory analyses of campaign records by going through paper records at the State Elections Board, they now frequently access the database. WDC has also affirmatively asked for research ideas and provided responses to queries overnight. The environmental community's *DNR Watch* series of newsletters contained extensive excerpts from campaign finance records in every issue and the Sierra Club found the data provided a vehicle to increase their members' political awareness. They now conduct workshops on how to investigate campaign finances at their gatherings and have endorsed campaign finance reform as a priority.

There is clearly no easy resolution of when and how data should be employed. The Massachusetts strategy worked well, but would it have advanced the reform agenda in a legislative state? North Carolina's ferreting out of scandals and aggressive use of the press, tabloids, and billboards in its Dealmakers Project has arguably set the stage for serious consideration of reform in the state legislature. Will such aggressive use of the database be essential to maintaining momentum, or will it be counterproductive as the "mainstream" coalition, the North Carolina Center for Voter Education, is activated and a comprehensive agenda is advanced in the legislature?

In an initiative battle, the ultimate arbiter is the individual voter. The ability to develop a systemic critique and deliver it through community workshops, free and paid media, and a mobilized army of volunteers has proven to be sufficient to achieve victory in several states (albeit with limited opposition). A primary challenge facing the reform community is translating these victories to states that allow policy agendas to move only through legislation. The decision-makers in these states are typically politicians who have demonstrated their ability to master the existing campaign finance system; it is often also the case in these states that control of the legislature has alternated between the political parties, and the specter of redistricting looms large. Officeholders have demonstrated an ability to wait out spates of critical press coverage and pressure generated by letters from dispersed constituents. Databases can help ensure that press coverage is deepened and sustained. Can they keep a large enough force of grassroots activists mobilized when legislation is subject to constantly changing timetables and its language has been subjected to a confusing array of amendments? Can constituencies that have an ongoing presence and influence in state capitols be engaged?

We have not had enough experimentation or history to develop universal criteria for when and how the databases should be used. To a large extent, these criteria will be determined by the unique and evolving political landscape in each state. The complexity of the issue speaks to the need to ensure that state partners are politically sophisticated and can clearly articulate the role of data analysis in their strategy rather than simply imitating releases issued in other states or attempting to impress funders with the volume or size of their reports. It is not sufficient to turn up the flame of public scrutiny without providing a blueprint for resolving fundamental problems.

Because of its specialized niche and depth of knowledge of the field, the Piper Fund can play a unique role in both strategically evaluating its grant program and working with state partners to refine their work. There are several questions and approaches that the board may wish to consider when evaluating potential grant recipients.

1. Is the organization the appropriate forum for the database project in the state?

The decision to fund an organization to compile and analyze campaign finance data is a grave responsibility. The organization that controls the database is given a powerful tool that significantly raises its profile in the reform community and changes the political dynamic in the state. This grant recipient will control access to the database, be viewed as a principal spokesperson by reporters, and determine how aggressively and strategically the database will be employed.

It will also be constrained by the personalities involved and its history of relationships with critical constituencies in the state. Whether benefiting from an established multi-issue coalition

or from a history of informal ties, the existing relationships nurtured by the organizational home of the database project have played a defining role in which organized constituencies could be engaged. Unless a prior history of trust and mutual respect has been established, the data may educate constituencies and help build paper coalitions but may not result in a genuine commitment of resources. Longstanding relationships also help to establish a context and procedures for handling inevitable disagreements over the use of the database and policy reform proposals.

2. Is the project adequately staffed? Does it have sufficient funding?

Organizations that have had to operate databases with limited resources have had notable accomplishments and have successfully used data analysis to establish an important base of support in the states. Site visits suggest, however, that a full-time staff is required to maximize the impact of projects. Whereas Ohio, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin have retained skilled staff, Idaho and Georgia have experienced high turnover among junior-level researchers. Idaho has, therefore, relied on standardized reports designed to generate press coverage but has failed to consistently incorporate data analysis into their coalition work or base-building efforts. West Virginia has assigned more experienced staff to its project, but only after its principal obligations to other agendas at its respective organizations have been met.

In OVEC's environmental issue work, we've often been successful at mobilizing hundreds of people. A few years back, our fifth "Stop the Pulp Mill Rally" drew over one thousand participants — we won that issue against really big odds and the public turnout made a huge difference. But we've found that very few people, even other activists, realize how much behind-the-scenes outreach and organizing work took place in order to assure such large turnouts at rallies.

*In reality, OVEC staff and volunteers worked for months on making hundreds of personal contacts, meeting with groups of people, working one-on-one with volunteers to find out what sort of activities they were most interested in doing, holding weekly planning meetings to divide outreach and other tasks among our various volunteers, staff and key collaborators from other groups, and zillions of follow up contacts to make sure every task was completed. This kind of intensive one-on-one outreach is incredibly time consuming. *And also largely invisible.**

In our campaign finance work in WV, we've been very fortunate to get funding from Piper, Deer Creek and Democracy South. This has allowed us to do a top notch job on the data gathering, analysis and publicizing; working closely with media; reaching out to other folks by speaking at meetings of other groups etc; organizing regular meetings of our coalition (People's Election Reform Coalition/WV) and keeping in touch with coalition partners between meetings.

BUT — given the huge amount of work that all the above activities require, we have NEVER had the resources to do the kind of intensive outreach and organizing that we've been able to do on environmental issues. Without sufficient funding for that intensive outreach and organizing work, it may be unrealistic to expect that campaign finance work in any state will mobilize hundreds of people.

But again, I can only speak from our experience here...

— Diane Brady, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Analyst positions are difficult to fill because they require a unique amalgam of talents. The skills to manipulate a database and the basic techniques of working with the media can be taught, but the joy of discovering the mysteries a database possesses combined with a level of political savvy and the sensibilities of an organizer are traits possessed by a small coterie of individuals.

All of these traits need not be possessed by a single individual, but they must be present and properly integrated in the organization.

Fortunately NIMSP is beginning to fulfill the labor-intensive role of data entry and cleaning for many states, which relieves a heavy burden from some of Piper's partners and removes a grueling component of many researchers' job descriptions. NIMSP has already demonstrated its value by ensuring reliable data entry in a cost-efficient manner for states, publishing aggregate statistics from state data and identifying multi-state trends. The state data projects still must complete the fingerprinting of many donors (identifying their economic interests, family members, etc.) and conduct analyses that require in-depth knowledge of the state's unique political landscape. Based on my interviews, it is also hard to imagine that NIMSP will be able to develop and nurture the depth of relationships necessary with the press or state-based constituencies. Over time, however, NIMSP may begin to set the standard for research in the states, by identifying lucrative veins to be mined, developing sophisticated model reports, and providing technical back-up support for the state projects

Adequate staffing will continue to define the success and sophistication of data projects. Fortunately, the Joyce Foundation has invested heavily in the Midwest, helping to ensure that these data projects have sufficient resources and are able to lead the reform community in developing mechanisms for expanding access to data. In other states the Piper grants have not been adequate for partners to hire or retain needed staff, and little additional funding has been identified or allocated. Where state partners have been fortunate enough to identify capable staff and have a clearly defined data analysis strategy, the Piper Fund should strive to help selected states expand their funding base for this work.

3. Does the organization have a clearly articulated strategy that integrates its data analysis capacity?

Grant proposals are often exceedingly vague on the plans for a database. This is understandable, because the tools of organizing and legislative advocacy do not typically include analyzing campaign finance data to build a base of support and move a reform agenda. Although the Piper Fund should not limit experimentation or the freedom to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities as they arise, it should require that organizations map how data analysis will be integrated into their work.

It is a common perception that a stack of press clips and a few large reports are required for renewed funding at foundations. As several of the states have demonstrated, data runs for individual reporters can be of greater value than a formal report authored by the project. Democracy South and others have refined mini-reports and individualized research for advocates with other organizations. These approaches often yield press coverage without any reference to the data project and, thereby, introduce new voices critiquing the campaign funding system that are less easily discounted than are those of habitual good government proponents.

Because the ultimate goal is to reform the campaign finance system, Piper's evaluations of potential grantees should concentrate on what role the data will play in convincing others to adopt the reform agenda, seeking organizing strategies tailored to specific constituencies. The greatest success has been achieved where project staff have worked with nonprofit organizations, unions, and community groups in identifying their priorities and conducted individualized analyses tying campaign contributions to these issue agendas and battles. Grant proposals and

reports should set forth how these individualized analyses will be transmitted and what mechanisms will be developed to maintain and expand the targeted constituencies' involvement.

4. Can greater cross-fertilization among data projects be encouraged?

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the site visits and interviews was discovering that organizations lacked knowledge of data analysis work in other states. Although expressing a strong interest in learning more about the work undertaken in other states, the data projects were not able to recommend the appropriate vehicle. Until a larger number of projects have achieved a base level of funding and the demands on the time of the most experienced staff is eased, there is agreement that more costly on-site training programs, mentorships, and other resource-intensive technical assistance projects should not imperil any potential for increased funding to the data projects and organizing programs. There are several more modest ideas that the Piper Fund may wish to explore.

An important step would be to circulate reports and releases as they are published to spur greater dialogue, replication, and refinements in the reform community. The Piper Fund might also consider mechanisms for circulating self-assessments of selected releases or compiling a manual with evaluative narrative. Although there are many demands on NIMSP as it continues to grow, it may be worthwhile to explore the possibility of its taking on the role of collecting and disseminating information and copies of reports and analyses undertaken in the states. NIMSP would benefit from such an alliance, and Piper would be laying the groundwork for providing future technical assistance to database projects.

The scope of the materials circulated should extend beyond the formal reports produced by the data projects. Each state is struggling to develop popular education materials that can be used with targeted communities such as environmental groups, communities of color, or labor. These often take the form of flyers, tabloids, articles in newsletters serving these communities, and conference or community workshops scripts.¹² Compelling narrative, singular data facts, and individualized research designs may provide a blueprint for other states. Although Public Campaign is developing materials on the national level for its State Organizing Committee, there is much to be learned from the experimentation and incorporation of state-specific data.

Although several of the database projects do not normally attend the Public Campaign gathering, Piper may wish to ascertain whether staff at the database projects are interested in a pre-conference training session at this event or some other gathering to take advantage of the dramatic divergence in skills and experience in the field. A one- or two-day event would allow sufficient time for structured skills-building workshops and informal opportunities to exchange information.

¹² An article in the NAACP's *Crisis* on the National Voting Rights Institute litigation was referenced as the spark that prompted interest among the African American community in North Carolina. Few states have incorporated data projects in outreach to communities of color, although the *Color of Money* report, released by Public Campaign in conjunction with numerous state affiliates, has begun to change this. At this time, however, there was simply not enough experimentation in the sites visited to evaluate. After my interviews, Idaho and Oregon held conferences targeting these communities. The Money in Politics Research Action Project in Oregon produced a tailored report for its April 2000 conference entitled *Money in Politics: A Modern Civil Rights Struggle*.

5. Should greater access be provided for the media and advocates in the state?

Where data projects can justify maintaining tight control over data, the Piper Fund should respect this strategy. I admit that I retain a level of skepticism that this is the appropriate approach. Although a data project certainly should carefully control the tenor of analysis directly referencing its organization, there is value in diversifying the voices entering this debate and encouraging others to incorporate a money in politics critique into its paradigm. Especially when financial and staff resources are limited, there is also much to be gained from engaging others in identifying unethical behavior, as has been exhibited by the partnerships with the media in each of the states visited.

Where the reform community identifies expanded data access as an important strategy, the Piper Fund may wish to consider encouraging further experimentation in opening access and training reporters and advocates on the potential and uses of the databases. The IRE campaign finance workshops conducted throughout the Midwest with Joyce Foundation funding and the media tours conducted by Ellen Miller during her tenure at the Center for Responsive Politics sensitized and trained many reporters. The new Texas reform organization, Campaigns for People, which received funding during the last docket, is planning a comparable journalism workshop in June 2000, sponsored by Austin Society of Professional Journalists (capitol press corps), the Texas Association of Broadcasters, and the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas.

Although no comparable workshops have been designed for the advocacy community, WDC and OCA have introduced these communities to analysis techniques, offered to conduct individualized data analysis on request, and provided direct access to the database through their web site. The independent work of the environmental and civil liberties community in Wisconsin and Texas referenced in the list of reports and releases (see Appendix C) demonstrates the ability of nonprofit advocates to conduct their own analyses. For both reporters and advocates, outreach and training has more often encouraged them to identify potential money and politics angles to their work, whereas the data project conducts the actual analysis. In these instances, the data projects can expand the number of communities incorporating this analysis into their work while retaining an ability to ensure responsible use of the data.

6. Can partnerships with the academic community be expanded?

The value of engaging academics to conduct more sophisticated analyses and use their credentials to evaluate and strengthen the policy agenda proposed by the reform community has been demonstrated. Professor John Green at the University of Akron Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics is considering hosting a conference for academics to inspire further studies using the expanding campaign finance databases. Although the Piper Fund's focus should remain on the reform community and the base-building component of this work, it may wish to be involved in the planning of this conference. Academic studies explore all facets of reform and are wielded by proponents and opponents of comprehensive reform. It would be helpful to identify those academics who are interested in this topic and are willing to work with the reform community and to present research queries that would be most helpful in the field.

These recommendations and the others that are interspersed in earlier sections of the report are meant to prompt a dialogue not only among the members of the Piper Board but also with state partners. I look forward to participating in these discussions and in the exciting development of the data compilation and analysis projects.

Appendix A – List of Interviews

Connecticut Phone Interviews

Connecticut Citizen Research Group / Connecticut Citizen Action

Tom Swan
139 Vanderbilt Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06110
860-947-2200 / 860-947-2222 fax
tswan@igc.org / www.ccag.net

Mindy Berman AFSCME Connecticut Council - Political Director

Georgia Site Visits and Phone Interviews

Project South: The Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide

Abbie Illenberger, Jerome Scott, and Becca Shepard
9 Gammon Avenue, SW
Atlanta, GA 30315
404-622-0602 / 404-622-7992 fax
projectsouth@igc.org / www.peacenet.org/projectsouth/

Georgia Rural Urban Summit

Melinda Bell, Daniel Levitas, and Ovita Thornton
P.O. Box 225
Decatur, GA 30031
404-373-5169 / 404-373-7459 fax
dlevitas@garus.org / <http://www.garus.org/>

Steve Alfred, Common Cause
Tsedey Betru, Fannie Lou Hamer Project
Winnett Hagens Southern Regional Council
Beth Nathan League of Women Voters of Georgia
Participants in Community Meeting in Athens, GA
Terence Dicks, Arthur Smith, Gwen Littleton, Ovita Thornton

Idaho Site Visits and Phone Interviews

United Vision for Idaho

Pam Baldwin, Judy Brown, Rod Hall, Jim Hansen, Sonya Rosario, Roger Sherman, and Rachel Weiner
P.O. Box 2181
Boise, ID 83701
208-331-7028
uvidaho@rmci.net / www.uvidaho.org/

Gary Allen Reform Party
Kevin Borden Idaho Citizen Alliance
David Callister State Legislator (R-Boise)
Joan Cartan-Hansen Idaho Public Television
Lark Corbeil, Director Northern Rockies News Service
Betsy Dunklin State Legislator (D-Boise)
S. Eugene Fadness Idaho Falls Post Register
Jon Hanian KBCI TV Boise
Shirleane Hayes Living Independence Network
Mark Lipscomb Idaho Rural Council

Richard Mabbutt	Fair Housing Council
Chuck Malloy	The Idaho Statesman
Len Norwitz	Western States Center
Randy Nunes and Craig Tripken	Idaho Working Group for Fair Elections
Jen Ray	Idaho Women's Network
Gary Richardson	Former Ada County Highway Commissioner
Bill Scott and Chris Kelly	KIDO Radio
Deanna Smith	Campaign Manager
Tom Trail	State Legislator (R-Moscow)
Darci Yarrington	Idaho Conservation Voters

Maine Interview

Maine Citizen Leadership Fund Money and Politics Project

George Christie
 One Pleasant Street
 Portland, ME 04101
 207-780-8657 / 207-780-0142 fax
mclf97@aol.com

Massachusetts Interview

Massachusetts Money and Politics Project / Commonwealth Education Project

David Donnelly and George Pillsbury
 37 Temple Place, 5th Floor
 Boston, MA 02111
 617-422-0017 / 617-451-7895 fax
massmonpol@aol.com

North Carolina Site Visits and Phone Interviews

Democracy South / North Carolina Alliance for Democracy

Carrie Bolton, Bob Hall, Pete MacDowell, and Len Stanley
 605-A Highway 54 West
 Chapel Hill, NC 27516
 919-967-9942 / 919-967-7595 fax
petemacdowell@all4democracy.org / www.all4democracy.org

Pearl Berlin	Citizens for Responsible Government in Greensboro/ Guilford County
Jack Betts	<i>Charlotte Observer</i>
Alan Briggs	Save Our State
Marleen Chasson	Friends of Residents in Long-Term Care
Rob Christensen	<i>Raleigh News & Observer</i>
Carolyn Coleman	Office of Minority Affairs of Governor James Hunt and NAACP Board
Barbara Earls	Project Jubilee
Steve Ford	<i>Raleigh News & Observer</i>
Senator Wib Gulley (D)	North Carolina State Legislator
Gary Grant	Concerned Citizens of Tillery
Gerry Hancock	Everett, Gaskins, Hancock & Stevens
Joe Kilpatrick	Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
Laura Deaton Klauke	NC Alliance for Transportation Reform
Todd Miller	NC Coastal Federation
Jim Warren,	NC WARN
Lou Zeller	Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

Ohio Site Visits and Phone Interviews

Citizens Policy Center / Ohio Citizen Action

Catherine Turcer and Laura Yeomans
P.O. Box 8
Dover, OH 44622
330-343-9588 / 330-364-9901 fax
lyeomans@ohiocitizen.org / <http://www.ohiocitizen.org/>

Investigative Reporters and Editors

Cindy Eberling
Campaign Finance Information Center
138 Neff Annex
Missouri School of Journalism
Columbia, MO 65211
573-882-2042 / 573-882-5431 fax
cindy@ire.org / www.ire.org

The Money Trail Workshop

Jon Craig
John C. Green
Reverend Werner Lange
Margaret V. Rolf
Peg Rosenfield
Sandy Theis

The Beacon Journal
Univ. of Akron Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied
Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee
Office of Secretary of State
League of Women Voters
Cleveland Plain Dealer

Oregon Interview

Money in Politics Research Action Project / Western States Center

Moira Bowman
P.O. Box 11314
Portland, OR 97211
503-283-1922 / 503-283-1877
miprapmb@teleport.com

Anita Rogers

Community Alliance for Tenants

Texas Site Visits and Phone Interviews

Texans for Public Justice

Craig McDonald, Bill Medaille, and Andrew Wheat
609 W. 18th Street, Suite E
Austin, TX 78701
512-472-9770 / 512-472-9830 fax
tpj@tpj.org / www.tpj.org

Walt Borges
Stuart Eskenazi
Reggie James
Fred Lewis
Todd Main
Ross Ramsey
Wayne Slater
Robin Schneider
Tom "Smitty" Smith
Samantha Smoot

Court Watch
Dallas and Houston Observer
Consumers Union
Campaigns for
Texas Coalition for the Environment
Texas Weekly
Dallas Morning News
Public Research Works
Public Citizen
Texas Freedom Network

West Virginia Phone Interviews

Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition / West Virginia People's Election Reform Coalition

Janet Fout and Diane Brady
P.O. Box 6753
Huntington, WV 25773-6753
304-522-0246 / 304-525-6984 fax
dbrady@marshall.edu / www.ohvec.org/

Wisconsin Site Visit and Phone Interviews

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

Gail Shea and Mike McCabe
16 North Carroll Street, Suite 420
Madison, WI 53703
608-255-4260 / 608-255-4359 fax
shea@wisdc.org / www.wisdc.org

Wisconsin Citizen Action Fund / Wisconsin Citizen Action

Roger Bybee, Caroline Castore, and Larry Marx,
152 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 308
Milwaukee, WI 53203
414-272-2562 / 414-274-3494 fax
rbybee@wi-citizenaction.org / <http://www.execpc.com/~jlohman/wca.html>

Mary Bergstrom	American Association of Retired Persons
Dan Bice	Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
Rich Eggleston	Alliance of Cities
Ed Garvey	Gubernatorial Candidate
Kevin Kennedy	Wisconsin State Elections Board
Don Kettl	University of Wisconsin La Follette Institute of Public Affairs
Ken Mayer	University of Wisconsin Political Science Professor
Jeff Mayers	Wisconsin State Journal
John Nichols	Madison Capital Times
Rep. Mark Pocan	State Legislator (D - Madison)
Phil Neuenfeld	AFL-CIO - Secretary
Keith Reoppel	Wisconsin Environmental Decade
Kerry Schumann	Wisconsin PIRG
Kelly Sparks	UAW Political Director
John Stocks	Wisconsin Education Association
Caryl Terrell	Sierra Club
Craig Thompson	Wisconsin Counties Association
Rep. Scott Walker	Wisconsin State Legislator (R)
Steve Walters	Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

National Resource Centers

Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law

Joshua Rosenkranz
161 Avenue of the Americas, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10013
212-998-6730 / 212-995-4550 fax
brennan.center@nyu.edu / www.brennancenter.org

Center for Governmental Studies

Craig Holman
10951 West Pico Blvd., Suite 120
Los Angeles, CA 90064
310-470-6590 / 310-475-3752 fax
holman@cgs.org / www.cgs.org

Center for Public Integrity

Chuck Lewis
910 17th Street, NW, Seventh Floor
Washington, DC 20006
202-466-1300 / 202-466-1101
clewis@publicintegrity.org / www.publicintegrity.org

Center for Responsive Politics

Larry Makinson
1101 14th Street, NW Suite 1030
Washington, DC 20005-5635
202-857-0044 / 202-857-7809
larry@crp.org / www.crp.org

National Institute on Money in State Politics

Jeff Malachowsky and Samantha Sanchez
648 North Jackson, Suite 1
Helena, MT 59601
406-449-2480 / 406-443-4216 fax
samanthas@statemoney.org / www.followthemoney.org

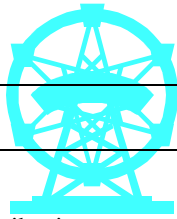
National Voting Rights Institute

John Bonifaz
294 Washington Street, Suite 713
Boston, Massachusetts, 02108
617-368-9100 / 617-368-9101 fax
nvri@nvri.org / www.nvri.org/index.html

Public Campaign

Ellen Miller and Nick Nyhart
1320 19th Street, NW Suite M-1
Washington, D.C. 20036
202-293-0222 / 202-293-0202 fax
emiller@publiccampaign.org / www.publiccampaign.org

Appendix B – UVI Wheel of Fortune Cards



	What They Gave	What They Got
Agribusiness	\$181k in 96 cycle and \$62k in first portion of 97-98 cycle	Protections for combined animal feed lots from local regulations Special property rights for lands leased from the public by grazing interests.
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	\$192k in 96 cycle and \$88k in initial portion of 97-98 cycle	Tax loophole for multinational corporations that allow them to treat income from passive foreign investment companies as dividends instead of income Special committee working to make it more difficult for communities to protect community values through planning and zoning.
Health Care	\$176k in 96 cycle and \$68k in initial portion of 97-98 cycle	Legislators killed AG's proposal for greater protections when nonprofit hospitals convert to for-profit status Legislators killed bill that would have extended coverage for doctor-prescribed contraception.
Labor	\$177k in 96 cycle and \$63k in initial portion of 97-98 cycle	Lose most battles, since they give less than 4% of the campaign contributions.
Miscellaneous Business	\$443k in 96 cycle and \$189k in initial portion of 97-98 cycle	Legislature authorized Board of Corrections and local governments to contract with private prisons Tobacco companies got watered down bill limiting local governments' power to restrict the sale of tobacco to minors.
Resources and Utilities	\$717k in 96 cycle and \$210k in initial portion of 97-98 cycle	Repeal of "public trust doctrine" which holds public officials accountable when they give away public resources for solely private gain. Special tax break for utilities allowing them to exclude franchises and rights-of-way from the definition of operating property
Single Issue Groups	\$124k in 96 cycle and \$35k in initial portion of 97-98 cycle	Almost always lose when opposed by corporate lobby. In 1997, the corporate lobby convinced legislature to pass legislation making it more difficult to put issues on the ballot by initiative.
Transportation	\$113k in 96 cycle and \$37k in initial portion of 97-98 cycle	Ability to put bigger and heavier trucks on state roads. Killed proposals to encourage use of public transportation.

Appendix C – Selected List of Reports and Press Releases Produced from Campaign Finance Databases¹³

Connecticut Citizen Research Group -- http://www.ccag.net/new_page_13.htm

- *The HMO Protection Act of 1999?: An Analysis of the Impact of Managed Care Campaign Contributions on Policy Decisions in Connecticut*, detailed the contributions from the managed care industry to Governor Rowland and Democratic challenger Barbara Kennelly.
- *The Color of Money: Campaign Contributions and Race*, September 1998, local release of Public Campaign report.
- *Where There's Smoke There's Money: An Analysis of the Impact of Tobacco Contributions on Policy Decisions in Connecticut*, August 1998, examined the connection between tobacco industry contributions to Governor Rowland's campaign and his lack of support for anti-tobacco policy initiatives.
- *Dirty Money: An Analysis of Campaign Contributors and Environmental Enforcement*, April 1998, identified thirty-five corporations which had environmental cases before the Rowland administration and documented a total of \$110,795 from their executives and employees to the Governor's 1994 campaign.

Project South: The Institute for the Elimination of Poverty and Genocide

- *Who Owns GA Politics? The Impact of Private Money on Georgia Elections Third Edition*, pending, an analysis of campaign contribution disclosure reports filed for the 1996 elections by winning candidates for the legislature.
- *The Color of Money: Campaign Contributions and Race*, September 1998, local release of Public Campaign report.
- *Who Owns GA Politics? The Impact of Private Money on Georgia Elections Second Edition*, October 1996, expands report to 68 members of the legislature including legislators who sponsored legislation harmful to low income communities.
- *Who Owns GA Politics? The Impact of Private Money on Georgia Elections*, February 1996, study of campaign contributions for 1994 elections to 25 members of the Georgia legislature comprising the legislative leadership and the Lieutenant Governor.

United Vision for Idaho

- *The L.A.P. Book Legislator Accountability Profiles, Vol. II An Analysis of the Campaign Funding to Members of the 55th Idaho Legislature*, March 1999, individual profiles of legislators and their contributors.
- *Buying Idaho: A Look at the Influence of Special Interest Group Investments and Policy Returns in the 54th Idaho Legislature*, Fall 1998, ties campaign contributions to legislative outcomes based on Center for Responsive Politics' *Cashing in Report*.
- *The L.A.P. Book Legislator Accountability Profiles: An Analysis of the Campaign Funding to Members of the 54th Legislature*, March 1997, individual profiles of legislators and their contributors.
- *Capitol Investments: An Analysis of Interest Group Investments and Policy Returns in the 53rd Idaho Legislature*, October 1996, ties campaign contributions to legislative outcomes.

¹³ The following list is neither comprehensive nor necessarily a compilation of best practices. It reflects the reports produced over the past few years that were reviewed during the course of the site visits and interviews. For Democracy South, Ohio Citizens Policy Center, Texans for Public Justice, and Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, I have only included items published in 1999 and 1998 due to the volume of their work. As with the entire report, the listing only reflects work up to the date of the site visits or interviews. States continue to expand and refine their work. For example, UVI has issued a new series of reports in January 2000 entitled "Lobby Link" on the top 50 lobbying interests in Idaho.

Maine Citizen Leadership Fund Money and Politics Project

- *Cashing In: Tobacco Smokes the Opposition . . . Again*, May 1997, data on amount spent by tobacco industry on lobbyists and campaign contributions with chart noting the amount legislators received and their voting record on related legislation.
- *Elections or Auctions? Who Paid for the 1996 Maine State Senate Primaries?*, September 1996, documented dominance of large contributors and major industries.
- *Cashing In: Tobacco Smokes the Opposition*, May 1996, data on compensation for tobacco lobbyists and their opponents and tobacco contributions to leadership PACs and political parties.
- *Cashing In: The Blue's Bid to go For-Profit*, May 1996, report issued during consideration of legislation to allow Blue Cross/Blue Shield to change to for-profit status noting contributions to relevant committee members, leadership PACs and lobbyists.
- *Elections or Auctions? Who Paid for Maine's Gubernatorial Elections*, February 1995, analysis of cost of gubernatorial campaign including source of contributions by size of donation, economic sector, and in-state/out-of-state designation.
- *Elections or Auctions: Who is Paying for Politics in Maine*, October 1992, analysis of elections including cost of running for Senate race over six year period, size of contributions, contributions to campaigns, leadership PACs and parties by economic sectors.

Massachusetts Money and Politics Project

- *1997 Officeholder Expenses of Massachusetts State Legislators*, November 1999, documents spending by state legislative incumbents from their campaign account during the 1997 “off-election” year. Issued during an attempt in the legislature to exclude contributions raised during off-years from the public financing system.
- *The Money Threshold: A Summary of Campaign Spending, Competition and Choice in the 1998 Massachusetts State Elections*, March 1999, explores aggregate spending patterns, imbalance between candidates, impact on outcome of election, threshold for viable campaign, incumbent advantages, and uncontested and non-competitive races.
- *Capitol Gains Big Donors in the State Legislature: A Study of Legislative Fundraising in Massachusetts*, April 1998, Who are the Donors – explores the identities and interests of donors; Why do donors give – analyzes timing and target of contributions and giving patterns to provide insight into reasons why donors give; What is the impact on public policy – evaluates legislative agenda of major donors.
- *No Money, No Contest: The Impact of Money on 1996 State Legislative Elections*, February 1997.
- *Laws for Sale: A Study of Money in the 1994 Ballot Questions*, May 1995, aggregate spending on nine statewide ballot initiatives, evaluation of donors and their giving patterns, analysis of campaign expenditures, and identification of new trends (large commercial out-of-state interests).
- *Dollars, Donors and Democracy: A Report on the Largest \$500 and Over Donors in the 1994 Gubernatorial Campaign*, February 1995.
- *Health vs. Wealth: Are Health Industry Campaign Funds Blocking Health Care Reform?*, April 1993.

Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action

- *Buy-Partisan: A Look at Big Money in Minnesota Politics, 1996–1997*, September 1997, evaluation of the 1993 reforms which identified loopholes and profiles contributors by economic sector and their impact on policy proposals.

Democracy South/NC Alliance for Democracy -- www.all4democracy.org

Tabloids

- *Is Lauch Faircloth a Senator for Sale*, September 1998, the tabloid provides an overview of political campaign contributions by economic sector and details Faircloth's record on issues of concerns to these interests.
- *Facing the Facts About Hogs*, August 1998, tabloid mailed to 100,000 households in southeastern NC portraying problems with the hog industry and the campaign contributions of Farmers for Fairness.
- *North Carolina Alliance for Democracy*, February 1998, tabloid newsletter including information on rising campaign costs for legislative campaigns, articles on three economic sectors highlighting campaign contributions and the policy agenda of the hog, banking and transportation sectors.
- *Big Grins, Dirty Money, Will Political Donations Decide North Carolina's Environmental Future?*, August 1996, a tabloid on the pollution lobby highlighting campaign contributions and lobbying expenditures from the "pollution lobby" (e.g., Home Builders PAC, the Manufacturers & Chemical Industry Council, NC Pork Producers Assn.). Based on a 3-part "Pollution Lobby" series in Durham's *Independent Weekly*. Distributed more than 40,000 copies as inserts in newsletters of NC Sierra Club, NC Coastal Federation, and other environmental groups.
- *Nuke Dump Is It Dead? – or Can Utilities Buy a Political Fix?*, August 1996, a tabloid on the siting of a low-level radioactive waste dump, featuring data on the political money of waste generators and their allies. 4,000 copies distributed to members of relevant environmental groups and 6,000 copies distributed in communities near the dump.

Press Releases and Brief Reports

- *Hog Money Influences the 1999 General Assembly*, November 1999, documents dramatic increase in political spending by the hog lobby in 1998 v. 1996 election including narrative on how the new Democratic majority used key committee appointments to reward the industry for its help in ousting Republican legislators in swing districts.
- *McCain-Feingold: The North Carolina Connection Top Soft-Money Donors Gave \$6.3 Million*, October 1999, release on top 15 soft-money donors based in NC.
- *Wealth Primary Filters Out Low Spenders: Supreme Court Justice, Legislators Say Action Needed*, March 1999, evaluated the funding disparity in the 1998 election between winners and losers in the General Assembly races, the fundraising advantage of incumbents, the growth of warchests and the increasing number of uncontested seats.
- *Millions Spent by Farmers for Fairness Prompts Call for "Issue Ad" Regulation*, February 1999, documents amount spent by hog industry trade group and supports Board of Elections ruling that the advocacy of Farmers for Fairness should be financed by a regulated political committee supported by non-corporate contributions.
- *Attorney General Hits Jackpot With Video Poker Money*, January 1999, detailed contributions received by the attorney general along with his successful solicitation of funds right after his office issued a ruling helpful to the video-poker industry and weakened crackdowns on illegal gambling.
- *Cost of Seat in General Assembly Soars: Lawmakers Expected to Seek Relief*, January 1999, documents total spending in 1998 General Assembly races, 32 percent jump over 1996, races exceeding \$100,000, and rise in role of soft money.
- *Pigs Pollution and Political Money*, September 1998, fact-laden handout, including sections on Governor Jim Hunt and state Senator Beverly Perdue, designed for mass distribution at two street festivals in eastern North Carolina, as part of the Dealmakers Project.
- *Disclosure Law in Jeopardy, Legislators Graded on Compliance*, August 1998, graded reports of 25 legislative leaders and highlighted funding/staff constraints faced by the state Board of Elections.
- *Critics Blast N.C. Republicans for Blocking Campaign Reforms, Favoring Business Donations*, June 1998, in reaction to a Republican party proposal to overturn ban on business contributions and allow unlimited donations, the release documents dominance of money in primary campaigns (e.g., disparity in resources between winners and losers, rising costs of campaigns, fewer contested races, and declining voter turnout). More Money, Less Democracy report.

- *Corporations Spend Millions on N.C. Elections; Some Violate Laws, Some Take Tax Deduction*, June 1998, study documenting \$7 million in corporate contributions and accused Farmers for Fairness of using tax-deductible dues for \$1 million in ads attacking a candidate, corporations of using soft money loophole to funnel \$3.4 million to candidates and state parties through national parties, and documents \$2.9 million contributed to referendum committees. Report issued during legislative fight over court case which overturned NC ban on corporations from directly or indirectly contributing to candidates and state parties. [Impact of Corporate Political Donations in NC](#) report.
- *Extortion, Bribery or Business as Usual*, May 1998, released on eve of Board of Elections hearings into a possible quid-pro-quo arrangement between the hog industry and the Republican leaders in the state House. The report revealed new information on unreported hog-related donations to Republican conduits, corporate donations routed through the national party to state GOP leaders and other suspicious contributions.
- *Big Bucks Back Bonds*, April 1998, reviewed the money raised to back a road referendum in Raleigh.
- *Fat Cat Meets Groundhog: Watchdog Group to Shadow Politicians*, February 1998, press event on Groundhog's Day announcing reformers would monitor compliance with new disclosure rules. The release included Democracy South report, [Examples of Bundling, Straw Donors and Conduits](#) and handouts featuring problems with campaign finance reports.

Ohio Citizens Policy Center --

<http://www.ohiocitizen.org/whatsnew/reports/money.html>

- *1993-1998 Campaign Contributions to Justices of the Ohio Supreme Court*, February 2000, documents top campaign contributors and the economic sectors supporting Supreme Court Justices. Includes a one-page financial profile for each Justice.
- *Take the Money and Win 1997-1998: The Power of Parties, Incumbency and Campaign Cash*, November 1999, profiles of statewide officeholders and legislators containing contributors by economic sector.
- *Take the Money and Win 1997-1998 Money98.dbf*, November 1999, manual accompanying compact disk containing databases of 1997-98 campaign contribution records in multiple formats.
- *Tobacco money in Ohio*, November 1999, printouts of campaign contributions by tobacco companies and PACs sorted by company and recipient during the 1997-98 Ohio election cycle.
- *Ohio political parties make progress in disclosure*, May 1999, grades political parties for their compliance with campaign finance disclosure rules in 1997-98.
- *Electric utility contributions to Ohio candidates and political parties, 1997-1998*, May 1999, documents contributions to candidates for legislative and statewide office and statewide political party contributions in 1997-98 from investor-owned utilities, their board members, employees, lobbyists and PACs with reference to utility deregulation policy agenda.
- *1998 Disclosure Report Card: Which Ohio Candidates Properly Disclose Contributions?*, April 1999, grades each candidate for their compliance with campaign finance disclosure rules for their 1998 reports.
- *1997 Disclosure Report Card: Which Ohio candidates properly disclose contributions?*, June, 1998. Same as above for 1997 disclosure reports.
- *Campaign contributions to the Ohio General Assembly from proponents and opponents of the Audit Privilege bill (S.B. 138), 1995-96 election cycle*, March 1998.

Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics - University of Akron

- *The Impact of the 1995 Ohio Campaign Finance Reforms: An Analysis of the Patterns of Donations and Donors, 1998-1994*, February 2000, report assesses the impact of the 1995 Ohio campaign finance reforms on the patterns of donations and donors in the 1998 election, using the 1994 elections as a baseline. <http://www.ohiocitizen.org/moneypolitics/greenanalysis.html>
- *The Next Steps: Options for Campaign Finance Reform in Ohio*, February 2000, suggests avenues for reform that "follow logically the 1995 reforms." <http://www.ohiocitizen.org/moneypolitics/greenoptions.html>

American Friends Service Committee

- *Ohio Supreme Justice For Sale: A Critical Review and Expose of Correlations Between Donations and Decisions in the Ohio Supreme Court*, January 2000, drew correlation between campaign donations to Ohio Supreme Court justices and court decisions.
- *Contracts and Contributions, Survey of Contracts Awarded by the City of Akron from 1990-1997 to 100 Top Contractors and Correlations to Contributions From Awardee-Affiliated Donors to the Mayor and At-Large Councilpersons in 1996-1997*, May 1998, draws correlation between contracts awarded and businesses' with city contracts that made campaign contributions.

Oregon Money in Politics Research Action Project

- *Money in Politics: A Modern Civil Rights Struggle*, April 2000, contains data tailored to communities of color, a history of voting rights laws, excerpts from the *Color of Money*, data on campaigns by candidates of color in Oregon and an analysis of "policy attacks on our communities." The report was designed for a conference.

Oregon Action

- *Undermining Democracy*, Fall 1999, a lengthy report containing analysis of aggregate data in Oregon's campaigns, the public policy impact of campaign contributions, and case studies.

Texans for Public Justice -- www.tpj.org

- *The Governor's Gusher: The Sources of George W. Bush's \$41 Million Texas War Chest*, January 2000, profiles of top donors and aggregate breakdowns by economic sector.
- *Toxic Exposure: How the Texas Chemical Council Pollutes Politics*, August 1999, documentation of toxic releases and "political releases" (PAC contributions, lobbying expenditures) of industrial polluters.
- *Texas PACs: An Analysis of PAC Spending in the 1998 Election Cycle*, June 1999, analysis of aggregate statistics on PACs, comparison between business, ideological and single-issue PACs, labor PACs, and PACs run by political parties.
- *Austin's Oldest Profession: Texas Top Lobby Clients and Those Who Service Them*, May 1999, report analyzing Ethics Commission filings to document leading lobby clients by industry, top 100 lobby clients and top 25 hired guns.
- *The Gated Community: How Texas Incumbents Lock Out Challengers*, April 1999, report documenting limited number of contested elections, funding advantage of incumbents v. challengers, amount raised by incumbents with no challenger, and disparity between winners and losers.
- *Texas Revolvers: Public Officials Recast as Hired Guns*, February 1999, report on registered lobbyists and revolvers (ex-legislators, agency heads and former legislative officers lobbying their former colleagues).
- *Dirty Air Dirty Money: Grandfathered Pollution Pays Dividends Downwind in Austin*, June 1998, amount spent by the PACS of "grandfathered" corporate polluters.
- *Payola Justice: How Supreme Court Justices Raise Money from Court Litigants*, February 1998, contains data on Supreme Court Justice's aggregate fundraising, identification of parties and lawyers with cases before the court and their contributions.
- *Mortgaged House: Campaign Contributions to Texas Representatives 1995-1996*, January 1998, analyzes contributions to Texas legislators evaluating contributions from outside of districts, size of contributions, interests represented, and the incumbent advantage.

Lobby Watch - series of one- to two-page releases

- *Grandpa Polluters Take Baby Steps*, May 1999, CARE Commitments for voluntary emissions reductions at "grandfathered" plants.
- *Collect Calls for Phone Deregulation*, May 1999, amount spent by telecom PACs.
- *The Big Lie*, April 20, 1999 deceptive anecdotes used by tort reform movement.
- *Deregulation - Hungry Power PACs*, April 1999, PAC contributions by utilities.

- *Bush "CAREs" for Big Air Polluters*, March 1999, lack of accountability in CARE program.
- *Pols Try to Bury Funeral Probe*, March 1999, PAC contributions by SCI, world's largest funeral chain, and intervention in investigation.
- *Houston Soft on Grandpa Polluters*, March 1999, role of grandfathered polluters and their lobbyists in drafting Houston's plan to control pollution.
- *Do We Really Need Lobby Reform*, March 1999, response of lobbyists to prior TPJ report.
- *"Tort Dodgers" Bankroll A.G.*, February 1999, contributions from Texans for Lawsuit Reform and its members to the TX Attorney General.
- *Cashing in on Public Service*, February 1999, study of revolving door between public servants and special-interest lobbyists.
- *Leninger's Lieutenant*, January 1999, contributions, loans and other signs of influence of Dr. James Leninger, a businessman and major campaign contributor with a "right-wing" agenda to the Lieutenant Governor.
- *Leninger, Weekley, McMinn Lead Tycoons Bankrolling Tort-Dodger PAC*, January 1999, profile of "fat cats" that support Texans for Lawsuit Reform.
- *10 TLR Tort Tycoons Invest \$2.5 million in Texas Elections*, October 1998, amount spent by ten top funders of Texans for Lawsuit Reform to PACs, Republican Party and candidates for state-wide office.
- *TLR floods close races with special interest PAC money*, October 1998, "TLR PAC contributions account for 10 percent to 64 percent of the money that nine legislative candidates raised between January 1997 and October 3, 1998."

Texas Freedom Network

- *Putting a Price on Public Education: An Analysis of the Voucher Lobby's Campaign Contributions in Texas*, March 1999, profiling the top campaign contributors supporting educational vouchers and their contributions to statewide office holders and legislators.

Public Research Works

- *Follow the Money . . . Grandfathered Air Polluters and Campaign Contributions*, April 1999, documents campaign contributions by polluting industries that are not subject to emission regulations since they were operating before clean air laws were passed. www.foree.com/prw.nsf

West Virginia People's Election Reform Coalition

- *West Virginia People's Election Reform Coalition, 1996 Election Cycle Report*, August 1997, profile of statewide office holders and legislators campaign donors by type and sector.

Wisconsin Democracy Campaign --

<http://www.wisdc.org/WDCSpReptPresRel.html>

- *Modern Carpetbaggers*, March 2000, report on campaign contributions from outside of winning legislators' districts.
- *Lawmakers Ignore Disclosure Law on Hundreds of Large Contributions*, March 2000, release on lawmaker campaign disclosure reports that failed to include required employer/occupation information.
- *Gasoline Retailer Violates Campaign Contribution Limits*, February 2000, release on donor that exceeded maximum contribution limit.
- *Bankers Collect Interest After Big Deposit*, February 2000, spike in contributions to legislator casting deciding vote defeating legislation prohibiting fees for ATM transactions.
- *The Campaign Arms Race Intensifies*, February 2000, documents amount raised by legislators in 1999 and their warchests.
- *The Governor's Big Money Day*, February 2000, documents amount raised by Thompson in 1999.

- *Legal Laundering -- A Report Examining the Link Between Special Interest Money and Legislative Leadership* Press Release and Special Report, November 1999, report on legislative campaign committees documenting major donors and growth.
- *Campaign Finance Reform: For the Sake of Our Kids* Opinion Piece, October 1999, article in *Wisconsin School News* that referenced campaign contributions from tourism industry and the sector's legislative victory in constraining school start dates.
- *Lawmakers working on their budgets instead of your budget!* Press Release, September 1999, details dozens of fund raisers scheduled by legislators despite failure to complete the state budget.
- *Senate Dems and Assembly GOP Set Pace in Money Chase -- Money Flowing to Power in Senate and Assembly*, September 1999, analysis of fundraising in first half of 1999.
- *Construction Firm Receives No-Bid Contract 2 Weeks Before Executives Give \$37,000 -- Fond du Lac Builder Gives Governor \$37,000 in One Day*, July 1999.
- *Road Builders Contribute More Than \$600,000 to Governor, Legislative Candidates* Special Report, June 1999, documents contributions by road builders, transportation unions and other special interests with a stake in the state's highway program and related PACs.
- *Institutional Bias: A Report Examining the Politics of Long Term Care* Special Report, May 1999, documents contributions from nursing home industry to statewide and legislative candidates over five year period with analysis of the industry's legislative agenda.
- *Candidate "self-financing" growing, adding to cost of political campaigns* Press Release, May 1999, analysis of personal contributions and loans from candidates to their campaigns with profiles of specific candidates.
- *Special Interest Contributions to Members of the Joint Finance Committee* Special Report, April 1999, report on contributions by selected economic sectors to committee with primary responsibility for state budget.
- *DLCC Uses Shell Game, Allows Corporate Money to Flow Into Wisconsin Legislative Races* Press Release, March 1999, local release of Center for Responsive Politics' *Trickle Down Politics* report documenting flow of corporate donations (banned by state law) to national and other state party conduits and their ultimate return to Wisconsin.
- *Realtors Do More Than Just Buy and Sell Houses in Wisconsin*. Special Report, April 1998, extensive analysis of donations by realtors and related interests analyzing where their contributions were sent (e.g., political party, incumbent v. challenger), identifying top recipients, documenting their lobbying expenditures, and reviewing their legislative agenda.

Wisconsin Citizen Action Fund

- *Courting the Supremes: Big Money in Wisconsin State Supreme Court Elections 1989-1999*, April 1999, documentation of trends in campaign financing of Supreme Court Elections, primary donors.
- *The Color of Money*, September 1998, local release of Public Campaign report.
- *The Drain on Democracy*, July 1998, study of time devoted to fundraising by legislative candidates.

Wisconsin Environmental Groups

- *Pothole Payback: How Roadbuilders and Developers Get Highway Project Payback While Your Local Roads Go Wanting*, October 1998, report by Sierra Club and 1000 Friends of Wisconsin documenting contribution to Governor from 1991-1998 from realtors, construction and road construction and transportation economic sectors with policy recommendations.
- *DNR Watch: Natural Resource Accountability Project*, regular series of reports on political control over Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources. Joint publication of Citizens for a Better Environment, Clean Water Action Council, Environmentally Concerned Citizens of the Lakeland Area, Northern Thunder, Sierra Club – John Muir

Chapter, and Wisconsin's Environmental Decade. December 1998 Report 4 issue included report on campaign contributions and environmental impact of cranberry operations. October 1998 Report 3 detailed policy agenda of mining interests and extensive analysis of this sector's campaign contributions.

Kenneth R. Mayer, University of Wisconsin Department of Political Science

- *Issue Advocacy in Wisconsin: Analysis of the 1998 Elections and a Proposal for Enhanced Disclosure*, September 1999, evaluates impact of issue ads with comparison of non-candidate, non-party spending versus candidate spending.
- *Public Financing and Electoral Competition in Minnesota and Wisconsin*, April 1998 through comparison of MN and WI, Mayer asserts that data shows public financing can succeed in the critical task of fostering competitive elections.

Appendix D – Legal Cases

Although not evident in the states chosen for this study, it is important to note the role that campaign data analysis can play in the legal defense of reforms enacted by initiative or legislation. The information needed varies from one litigation strategy to another but the Brennan Center for Justice, Center for Governmental Studies, National Voting Rights Institute, and Public Citizen Litigation Group all attest to the important role that data analysis plays in developing a legal case.

In the optimal scenario, the data analysis is conducted by a variety of sources in advance of drafting a reform proposal. Legal advocates can then argue that the reform was drafted in light of documented campaign behavior and that the policymakers were aware of the trends reflected in the data.

In the litigation surrounding the Maine public financing initiative, the courts referenced press files containing many clips generated by reports and releases issued by the Maine reform community. Although the District Judge referenced the competing studies submitted at trial, it was clear to many commentators that Professor Anthony Corrado's analysis of past campaign

In assessing the threat or appearance of corruption during its review of the Maine public financing law, **the First Circuit Court of Appeals** cited *abundant files of press clippings includes both news and editorial comment . . . the following sampling suggests that large contributions have occurred in Maine and that Maine citizens are concerned about their impact on lawmakers.*

data and his conclusion that candidates could amass sufficient resources to wage a vibrant electoral fight under the new public financing system was persuasive. Comparable analyses will be important as reformers set contribution limits in the future and test the Nixon v. Shrink Missouri Government PAC contribution limit parameters — "so radical in effect as to render political association ineffective, drive the sound of a candidate's voice below the level of notice, and render contributions pointless."

Relying on Democracy South's database, National Voting Rights Institute's "wealth primary" suit in North Carolina used regression analysis of electoral spending data to support its "proposition that raising and spending a substantial amount of money is a prerequisite to viable competition in campaigns for the North Carolina General Assembly. Controlling for the major variables that may have some effect on electoral results, including the race, gender, and party of the candidates, the partisanship of the electoral district, incumbency, previous offices held, as well as the racial composition, educational background, household income and occupation of the relevant electorate, . . . regression analyses confirm that campaign expenditures and electoral results are inextricably linked, independent of all other variables."