

PAYING FOR POLITICS

# An account of Idaho's top donors

Energy, financial and agriculture interests are the biggest players in the state

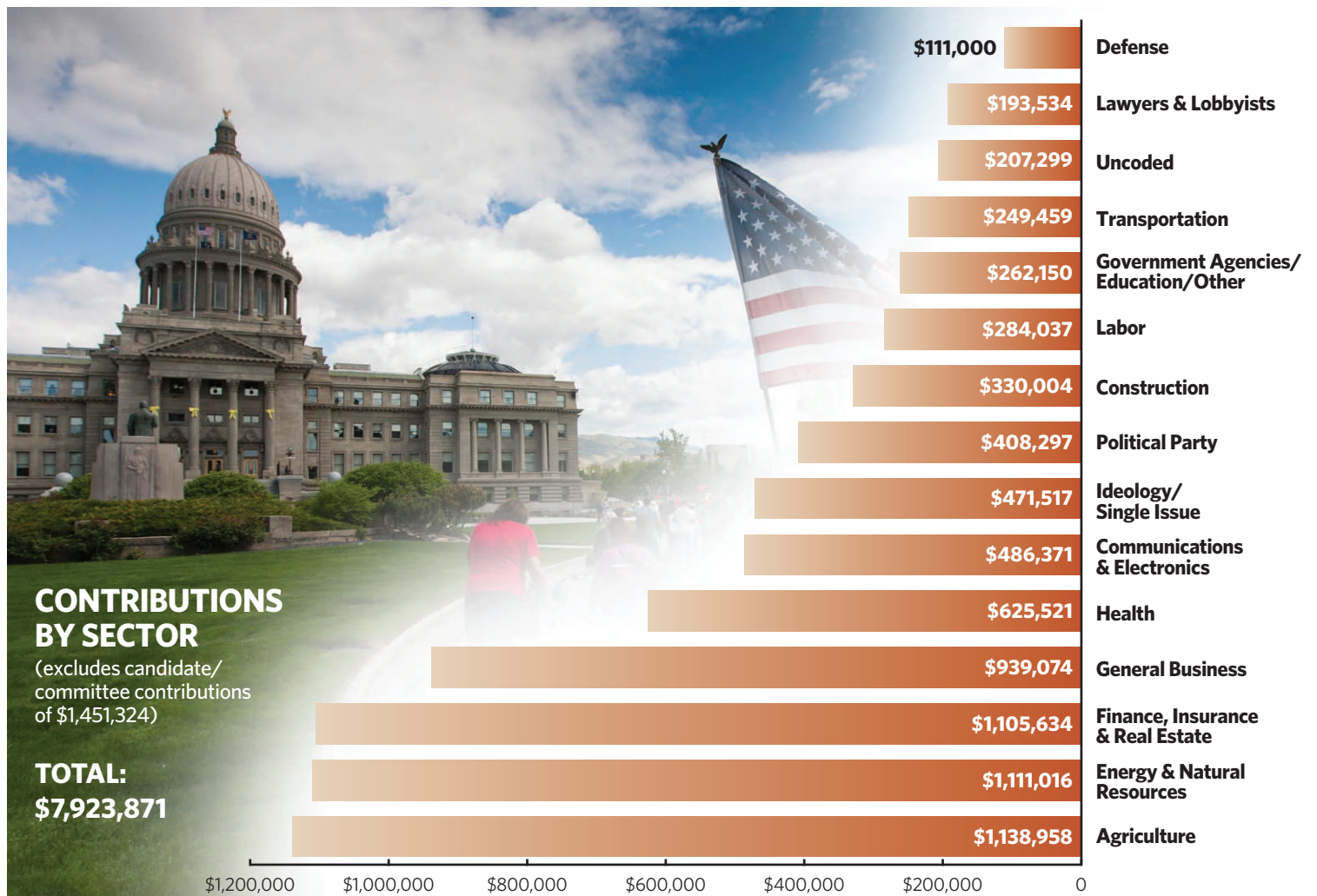
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Corporate campaign contributions in Idaho's 2014 elections were dominated by interests in agriculture, energy and natural resources, and financial service-related companies including insurers and real estate, with combined giving from those sectors accounting for more than one-third of all business giving.

A review of campaign donations shows that companies, trade groups and other organizations representing those top sectors gave roughly \$3.4 million to candidates in Idaho state races last year, about 36 percent of the \$9.4 million contributed by all organized groups, including businesses, PACs, political committees and other special interests.

Giving by individuals for the same period was \$11.3 million, and contributions of \$50 or less, which are not itemized, added another \$1.1 million, bringing the overall total to \$21.8 million.



Graphic by Lindsie Bergevin, reporting by Bill Dentzer, photo by Darin Oswald

From a national perspective, Idaho's total is a paltry sum, representing just .5 percent of the more than \$4.6 billion contributed in 2014. Overall, Idaho ranked 43rd among states in total dollars contributed, slightly behind Montana and ahead of South Dakota. The top five states were California, Texas, Illinois, Florida and New York. More than half a billion dollars poured into California, about

See **POLITICS, D2**

**SEE THE TOP 50 BUSINESS OR GROUP CONTRIBUTORS**

Also, a breakdown by sector and industry. **D2**

**FIVE QUESTIONS ON CAMPAIGN SPENDING**

Take this short quiz to test your knowledge.

1. Agricultural sector interests donated the most to Idaho campaigns in the last election cycle. Which of these agricultural industries gave the most?  
A. Forestry & forest products  
B. Ranching/Livestock  
C. Crop production, processing
2. Which of these health-related groups donated the most?  
A. The Idaho Medical Association  
B. The Idaho Hospital Association  
C. Blue Cross of Idaho

3. Whose committee did the Arizona Democratic Party contribute money to?  
A. A.J. Balukoff  
B. Idaho Democratic Legislative Caucus  
C. Idaho Democratic Party
4. Which of these three out-of-state groups gave the most in 2014?  
A. National Rifle Association  
B. Koch Industries  
C. Citizens United

5. What business interests are represented by the Idaho Committee on Hospitality & Sports?  
A. Hotels and tourism  
B. Sports and entertainment  
C. Beer, wine and spirits

**ANSWERS**

1. A - Forestry: nearly \$306,000.
2. A - Idaho Medical Association: \$53,250.
3. C - Idaho Democratic Party.
4. B - Koch Industries: \$23,000.
5. A - Hotels/motels and tourism. It donated \$36,950 to candidates in 2014.



