

Greater Wisconsin Committee Top Spender in Statewide and Legislative Elections

Written by Wisconsin Democracy Campaign

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/gwc-ad-aside-walker-why-less-s5.jpg>



Greater Wisconsin, created in 2006 to support Democratic candidates, spent more than \$27.6 million and leads groups that spent more than \$2 million on independent expenditures or issue ads in Wisconsin's statewide and legislative elections since the beginning of 2010 according to Democracy Campaign research. Republican Governors Association second with \$18.4 million.

MADISON - The table below shows groups that spent more than \$2 million on [independent expenditures](#) or [issue ads](#) in Wisconsin's statewide and legislative elections since the beginning of 2010. The groups in the table are listed in descending order by spending.

This table will be updated with spending by groups in future elections.

Descriptions of each group can be found below the table where they are listed alphabetically. For more detailed information on each election, see our "[Interest Group Spending](#)" feature.

| Group | Total |
|---|--------------|
| Greater Wisconsin Committee* | \$27,600,000 |
| Republican Governors Association* | \$18,400,000 |
| We Are Wisconsin | \$17,893,911 |
| Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commercial Association* | \$16,800,000 |
| Wisconsin Club for Growth* | \$11,400,000 |
| Americans for Prosperity* | \$5,600,000 |
| American Federation for Children* | \$5,400,000 |
| National Rifle Association | \$3,565,984 |
| Citizens for a Strong America* | \$2,700,000 |
| Emily's List | \$2,482,544 |
| Republican State Leadership Committee* | \$2,400,000 |
| Wisconsin Education Association Council | \$2,128,678 |

*All or part of the group's spending was estimated by the Democracy Campaign because the

group engaged in secret issue ad spending.

Group Descriptions

American Federation for Children is a Washington, D.C.-based [group](#) that supports the creation and expansion of voucher schools in Wisconsin and throughout the country. The federation mostly supports Republican candidates for statewide and legislative offices in Wisconsin. One of the group's top consultants is former GOP Assembly Speaker

[Scott Jensen](#)

. The organization has engaged in secret spending on issue ads, and also operates two corporations that make disclosed

[independent expenditures](#)

on electioneering activities.

Americans for Prosperity is a [conservative ideological group](#) [funded](#) mostly by billionaire brothers [Charles and](#)

[David Koch](#)

that engages in secret

[issue ad](#)

spending to support conservative Republican candidates for state and federal offices throughout the country. The group was created in 2003 and first appeared in Wisconsin elections in the 2011 and 2012 recall elections to support Walker and other Republican candidates.

Citizens for a Strong America is a conservative group that supports Republican and conservative judicial candidates for statewide and legislative offices using undisclosed

[issue ads](#)

. The

[group](#)

was created in 2011 and had ties early on to Americans for Prosperity and Wisconsin Club for Growth. The organization is also among numerous groups reportedly involved in a

[John Doe investigation](#)

into campaign finance law violations by special interest groups and the Walker campaign during the 2011 and 2012 recall elections.

Emily's List is a Washington, D.C.-based [organization](#) that supports women Democratic candidates for state and federal offices throughout the country. In Wisconsin, the organization used two [corporations](#) in the 2011

recall and the 2014 general elections to make disclosed

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[independent expenditures](#)

on outside electioneering activities to support women candidates for the legislature and governor and oppose Republican anti-abortion policies.

Greater Wisconsin Committee was created in 2006 to support Democratic candidates in statewide and legislative elections. [Greater Wisconsin](#) is among the largest-spending outside electioneering groups in Wisconsin statewide and legislative elections. The group discloses little about its fundraising but gets the bulk of its cash from labor unions and Democratic ideological groups, like the Democratic Governors Association, that are also supported by wealthy business interests. Greater Wisconsin operates a political action committee, corporation, issue ad group and a

[527 organization](#)

. The organization's outside electioneering activities is a combination of disclosed

[independent expenditures](#)

and undisclosed

[issue ads](#)

.

National Rifle Association is the nation's largest and most politically powerful pro-gun [group](#). It spends heavily on electioneering activities to support Republican candidates for state and federal offices throughout the country. The

[NRA](#)

operates a PAC and a corporation in Wisconsin that make disclosed

[independent expenditures](#)

. The group has been involved in Wisconsin statewide and legislative elections since at least 2000.

Republican Governors Association spends tens of millions of dollars a year to support Republican candidates for governor throughout the country. The

[group](#)

operates a state political action committee here called Right Direction Wisconsin PAC. The association has been one of the top outside electioneering groups in Wisconsin races for governor, supporting Republican Gov. Scott Walker in the 2010 general, 2012 recall and 2014 general elections. The group raises much of its money from wealthy individual and corporate special interests using a

[527 organization](#)

and has sponsored undisclosed

[issue ads](#)

, but mostly makes disclosed

[independent expenditures](#)

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Republican State Leadership Committee is a Virginia-based [group](#) that support Republican legislative candidates throughout the country. The group has engaged in outside electioneering activities in Wisconsin since 2010 using undisclosed issue ads and a state corporation that makes [independent expenditures](#) to support GOP legislative candidates.

We Are Wisconsin is a [coalition](#) of national labor unions that created a PAC in 2011 and a corporation in 2012 to support Democratic candidates in the recall elections against Walker, Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch and in 13 state Senate races. The recalls were spurred by Walker's successful plan to slash public employee collective bargaining rights. The group continued to support Democratic legislative and statewide candidates in the 2014 elections, and spends its money on disclosed [independent expenditures](#).

Wisconsin Club for Growth is the state arm of the national [Club for Growth](#), which supports conservative Republican candidates for public office throughout the country. The state group first appeared in 2007 and has secretly spent millions of dollars on undisclosed [issue ads](#) to influence elections for governor, the Wisconsin Supreme Court and the legislature. Wisconsin Club for Growth is also among [numerous organizations](#) reportedly involved in a John Doe investigation into campaign finance law violations by special interest groups and the Walker campaign in the 2011 and 2012 recall elections.

Wisconsin Education Association Council ([WEAC](#)) is the state's largest teachers union that uses a PAC and a corporation to make disclosed [independent expenditures](#) to support Democratic candidates for statewide office and the legislature. In addition to its own spending on outside electioneering activities, WEAC has also funneled millions of dollars over the years to other groups that support Democratic candidates. WEAC PAC is also a frequent direct contributor to Democratic candidates.

Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce is the state's [largest business organization](#) and a perennial political heavyweight in state policymaking, spending and elections. The

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[group](#)

has backed Republican and conservative candidates for statewide office and the legislature as far back as 1996. WMC uses a combination of lobbying and substantial, secret spending on undisclosed

[issue ads](#)

to sway elections and to influence how the governor and the legislature handle dozens of state policy and spending issues, including taxes, labor, education, and environmental regulation.

WMC is also among several groups

[reportedly involved in a John Doe investigation](#)

into campaign finance law violations by special interest groups and the Walker campaign in the 2011 and 2012 recall elections.